

OVERCOMING BOWL GOUGE PROBLEMS • MAKING CLOSED END PENS

# Woodturning

THE WORLD'S LEADING MAGAZINE FOR WOODTURNERS

**Techniques for  
creating illuminated  
turned objects**

In profile: The artistic  
work of John Lucas

Tips for turning  
offcentre items

## PROJECTS

- Laburnum apple
- Decorative lidded bowl
- Cutting board from offcuts
- Carved and stained pepper mills

Two methods  
for adding colour  
to your turnings





## SC3 Geared Scroll Chuck Package



### Includes:

- SC3** Geared Scroll Chuck  
(Thread options below)  
**62313** 50 mm Jaw Set  
**JS25N** 25 mm Jaw Set  
**6025** Mini Step Jaw Set  
**10006** Woodworm Screw  
**61016** Pinion Key

### Thread Options:

- 61004** 3/4" x 16 TPI  
**61002** 1" x 8 TPI  
**61005** M33 x 3.5

## SC4 Professional Geared Scroll Chuck Package



### Includes:

- SC4** Professional Geared Scroll Chuck  
**62313** 50 mm Standard Jaw Set  
**JSPIN** Pin Jaw Set  
**62833** Standard Woodworm Screw  
**3326** 8 mm Ball Hex Key  
**62825** Universal Spanner  
Chuck Insert (See website for full range of inserts)

## New Woodturning Chuck Jaw Range

As part of the design process involved in creating this brand new range, we looked in depth at the ranges of jaws available to today's woodturners. Our aim was to create a new range which allowed for all the flexibility currently on offer whilst also engineering out superfluous features and, where possible, condensing the attributes of some jaw designs to increase their usefulness. The result is a comprehensive range of 14 intelligently designed

sets of chuck jaws, some of which are brand new designs exclusive to Record Power. This range offers woodturners a definitive collection of jaws to cover virtually any woodturning task and represents unbeatable value for money.



**62321** 35 mm Standard Jaws  
£34.99



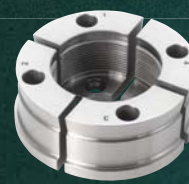
**62313** 50 mm Standard Jaws  
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**62329** 100 mm Dovetail and Deep Gripper Jaws  
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**62317** 130 mm Dovetail Jaws  
£54.99



**62322** 75 mm Heavy Bowl and Gripper Jaws  
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**62323** Long Nose Jaws  
£59.99



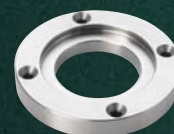
**62327** Pin Jaws with 9 mm Bore  
£49.99



**62336** Mini Spigot Jaws with 13 mm Bore  
£39.99



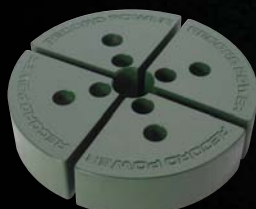
**62337** Pen Jaws  
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£29.99



**62574** 4 Inch (100 mm) Faceplate Ring  
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**62356** Remounting Jaws Mini - Up to 200 mm Bowl  
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**62376** Remounting Jaws Mega - Up to 295 mm Bowl  
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Prices valid until 31.08.2015. E&OE.



For full details of the brand new range of chucks and jaws please visit the Record Power website or request your free copy of the Spring / Summer 2015 promotional catalogue.





# Introducing the Brand New Range of Woodturning Chucks and Jaws

We are extremely proud to introduce the brand new range of Record Power woodturning chucks and jaws. This exclusive new range has been developed using Record Power's extensive experience and knowledge of woodturning in conjunction with a group of highly experienced professional and hobby woodturners, to bring

you the ultimate in quality, versatility and value. Incorporating the best elements of our previous ranges, we have also listened closely to our valued customers over the years and have taken note of their feedback, suggestions and requests to guide our design approach.



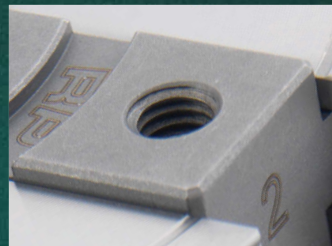
#### Precision Engineered Gears

Super Geared True-Lock™ technology ensures high levels of accuracy to provide smooth and solid operation.



#### Jaw Fixing System

The SC3 and SC4 feature a jaw fixing which will not only fit the Record Power series of Jaws but is also fully compatible with Nova and Robert Sorby brand jaws.



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The improved and enlarged jaw slides give unsurpassed holding power and load bearing ability. They are made from high tensile steel, reinforced with nickel and copper and heat-treated to ensure superior strength.



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# Making time for turning



Reorganising the GMC turning area

We are entering the warmer months now and many people stop going into the workshop so much at this time of year and get out and about on holiday, busy in the garden and other things that suit the nicer weather. I chuckled to myself when writing that line because quite a few people contacted me last autumn saying they don't get in the workshop much during the colder months because the workshop doesn't get warm enough for it to be comfortable to work in.

It is a well-known trend in the warmer months that things go somewhat quiet in the workshop activity-wise. Maybe some people will say their workshops are too hot to work in during the summer! My comment would be that there is always the evening when things get cooler and quieter.

I am in the process of reorganising the

GMC turning area. It is long overdue and the longer evenings and warmer days mean that I can move things in and out a lot easier while shifting things about. It's amazing what one finds behind benches, workshop timber piles, etc. I had a similar experience in my own workshop recently when changing things about there. I found 12 things that I thought I had lost – four had fallen behind the bench!

One thing of note is that you rarely see many major shows at this time of year that are geared towards the woodworker in the UK – maybe this is the case in other countries too? So there is not a lot of activity for woodworkers to lock into during the summer time. But does that mean we should forget workshop time? I know it needs to be balanced with all the other things one needs or wants to do, but, at times, there does seem to be more need or want to do something else

than spend time in the workshop, no matter what the season.

I do know of people who turn things for the garden. Are you one of those? If you are, what have you made and please could you send in some photos? I know people have made things such as garden dibbers, cane tops, sculptures for the garden – yes, some large mushrooms/toadstools in among them, large turned hedgehogs and many more things. I like the fact that there are fun as well as useful things being done, but turned things for the garden are not that commonly found or undertaken as projects.

So, just because it is summer, don't forget the workshop time, but remember to have fun!

markb@thegmcgroup.com



Woodworkers Institute website ([www.woodworkersinstitute.com](http://www.woodworkersinstitute.com)) is thriving. It would be great if you took a look and participated in the various discussions and competitions in our community, or see us on Facebook & Twitter.





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See page 11 for Andy Coates' article on ideas for illuminated turned objects. Photograph by Andy Coates



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### NEWS, LATEST PRODUCTS, MAGAZINE UPLOADS & EVENTS

can all be found on [www.woodworkersinstitute.com](http://www.woodworkersinstitute.com). These all appear on the magazine homepage and you can see a bigger selection by scrolling down the page and clicking on the individual stories. We also have an extensive online archive for you to browse

**Subscribers!**  
Turn to page 28 for subscription special offers and you could save 30%!





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Conversion chart	
2mm	( <sup>5</sup> / <sub>64</sub> in)
3mm	( <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
4mm	( <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> in)
6mm	( <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> in)
7mm	( <sup>7</sup> / <sub>32</sub> in)
8mm	( <sup>5</sup> / <sub>16</sub> in)
9mm	( <sup>11</sup> / <sub>32</sub> in)
10mm	( <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
11mm	( <sup>7</sup> / <sub>16</sub> in)
12mm	( <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> in)
13mm	( <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> in)
14mm	( <sup>7</sup> / <sub>16</sub> in)
15mm	( <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
16mm	( <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
17mm	( <sup>11</sup> / <sub>16</sub> in)
18mm	( <sup>9</sup> / <sub>16</sub> in)
19mm	( <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> in)
20mm	( <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> in)
21mm	( <sup>13</sup> / <sub>16</sub> in)
22mm	( <sup>11</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
23mm	( <sup>23</sup> / <sub>32</sub> in)
24mm	( <sup>15</sup> / <sub>16</sub> in)
25mm	(1in)
30mm	(1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
32mm	(1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> in)
35mm	(1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
38mm	(1 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
40mm	(1 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
45mm	(1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> in)
50mm	(2in)
55mm	(2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> -2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> in)
60mm	(2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
63mm	(2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> in)
65mm	(2 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
70mm	(2 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
75mm	(3in)
80mm	(3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
85mm	(3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
90mm	(3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
93mm	(3 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
95mm	(3 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
100mm	(4in)
105mm	(4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
110mm	(4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> -4 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
115mm	(4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> in)
120mm	(4 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> in)
125mm	(5in)
130mm	(5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
135mm	(5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> in)
140mm	(5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> in)
145mm	(5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
150mm	(6in)
155mm	(6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
160mm	(6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> in)
165mm	(6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
170mm	(6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> in)
178mm	(6 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> in)
180mm	(7in)
185mm	(7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> in)
190mm	(7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> in)
195mm	(7 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> in)
200mm	(8in)
305mm	(12in)
405mm	(16in)
510mm	(20in)
610mm	(24in)
710mm	(28in)
815mm	(32in)
915mm	(36in)
1015mm	(40in)
1120mm	(44in)
1220mm	(48in)
1320mm	(52in)
1420mm	(56in)
1525mm	(60in)

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Woodturning is an inherently dangerous pursuit. Readers should not attempt the procedures described herein without seeking training and information on the safe use of tools and machines. All readers should observe current safety legislation.



## GPS Agencies Ltd Blanks Now Available



### Polyester Rod Blanks

With a large variety of colours and patterns these 150mm long rod blanks offer some unusual choices for pen turners.

Available in three diameters:  
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# Round & about

We bring you the latest news from the world of woodturning as well as letters from the Woodworkers Institute forum and important dates for your diary from the woodturning community

## New AAW offerings help woodturners connect



Screenshot of AAW Connects



AAW Program Director, Linda Ferber, uses AAW Connects to locate woodturning organisations and schools

The American Association of Woodturners (AAW) recently launched two exciting new services. These offerings were based on recommendations from the AAW's Chapter Relations Initiative (CRI) work group, which was convened to review and enhance benefits for AAW members and chapters.

### AAW Connects

AAW Connects is a one-stop, web-based map tool that 'connects' users with information about international woodturning schools, woodturning organisations, exhibitions and symposia, as well as AAW chapters, chapter events and demonstrations. AAW Connects was built using an easy-to-navigate Google Map application that enables users to click on an area of the globe, zoom in and obtain relevant information for specific woodturning venues, such as website address, contact information, dates, times, etc. So far, the response has been tremendously favourable. "The AAW is pleased to offer a visual tool to help woodturners around the globe connect with turning resources in their regions," stated Phil McDonald, executive director for the AAW. "Accuracy of source data is a priority and we need to



The AAW Woodturning Marketplace banner

rely a great deal on AAW chapters and others in the greater woodturning community to help ensure that the data is accurate and complete." You can experience the new AAW Connects map tool at [www.woodturner.org/?page=AAWConnectsMap](http://www.woodturner.org/?page=AAWConnectsMap).

### AAW Woodturning Marketplace

Woodturning Marketplace is an online advertiser hub that consolidates all AAW's business supporter logos onto one webpage list. The logos are hot-linked and users may 'click-through' directly to advertiser websites, which makes finding information

about woodturning products and services easy. What's more, AAW's business partners can extend offers and discounts exclusively to members through Woodturning Marketplace. Over the coming months, members will see a growing range of special deals featured on the Woodturning Marketplace.

"The Marketplace is intended to make locating information about woodturning-related businesses and services a simple process," Phil McDonald commented. "Moreover, it provides a means for woodturning suppliers to connect with customers, as well as extend discounts not otherwise available elsewhere to AAW members." Visit the Woodturning Marketplace at [www.woodturner.org/?page=Marketplace2](http://www.woodturner.org/?page=Marketplace2).

A nonprofit organisation dedicated to advancing the art and craft of woodturning worldwide, the AAW continues to identify opportunities to better meet the needs of all woodturners through education, information, inspiration and community.

Contact: AAW

Tel: (001) 877 595 9094

Web: [www.woodturner.org](http://www.woodturner.org)



# AWGB International Woodturning Seminar 2015

Every two years, the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain – AWGB – holds a seminar to bring the very best in international woodturning to woodturners and the general public. The 2015 seminar will be an incredible woodturning experience, bringing you lots of what you've already come to expect from the seminar and a few new twists, which the organisers hope will provide a fresh look.

You can expect to see five international woodturners of note and five of the top woodturners from the UK circuit and as a new approach, there will also be a number of shorter, supplementary presentations and demonstrations from a range of people. All this will be supported as usual by the ever popular 'one-slot' demonstrations from woodturners who are stepping up to the international seminar stage for the first time. So there will be more choice and a wider

scope in terms of the type of demonstration/presentation you can enjoy.

As usual, there will be a substantial trade area in the James France building, with traders offering everything for the woodturner's workshop, from tools and consumables, wood blanks, equipment and new gadgets and gizmos to take your turning to new and exciting areas.

There will also be an instant gallery of turned objects that can be viewed freely by delegates and the general public. The instant gallery is always a huge draw, showcasing the vast range of high-quality work from turners from the UK and elsewhere around the world. A walk around the exhibition will enthuse and inspire you – you may even find something to add to your collections with many objects being offered for sale direct from the makers.

As usual, the banquet will be held on

Saturday evening, which is always great fun and a great excuse to catch up with friends, make new friends and contacts and have a little fun during the traditional auction of turned objects, which raises much needed funds for the charity's development fund.

This year, the cost of the seminar is reduced, in an effort to make it even more appealing, but you can be assured that you will have a fabulous weekend of total immersion in woodturning and go home enthused, inspired and ready to try some of the new techniques and approaches you have gleaned during the seminar. Places are limited, so to book online, see details below.

**When:** 7–9 August, 2015

**Where:** Loughborough University, Epinal Way, Loughborough LE11 3TU

**Contact:** AWGB

**Web:** [www.awgb.co.uk/seminar-booking](http://www.awgb.co.uk/seminar-booking)

## Mick O'Donnell visits Adelaide's Northern Turners

Mick O'Donnell has been holidaying down under – in Adelaide – visiting his new grandson. One outing arranged by his son took him to a woodturning display at the Botanic Gardens, where he was recognised by a member of Adelaide's Northern Turners. Naturally, he was invited to the club's next meeting.

More than 50 members welcomed him to the meeting and watched his demonstration. Mick began by discussing tools and techniques, with some thought provoking comments about particular tools and sharpening angles. Skew chisels, gouges, scrapers; even the humble parting tool were presented in a new light, along with his theories and practical examples of the results. His suggestion of a hollow ground parting tool was met with considerable interest. He then moved onto green turning with a discussion of the design process based on the

properties of the wood to be used, followed by turning demonstrations for a natural-edge bowl and a super-thin-stemmed goblet. The thin wall of the goblet was well demonstrated using a suitably placed light. Thanking him, Northern Turners' President, Jan Beare, said: "Many of us have read Mick's books and articles in *Woodturning* magazine, so we feel privileged to have had a visit from such a well known and skilled woodturner." Afterwards, Mick signed copies of his books brought in by several members. Visitors are always welcome at Northern Turners meetings.

Readers can find contact details on the below website.

**Gordon Best –**

**Northern Turners Publicity Group**

**Contact:** Gordon Best

**Tel:** +61 8 8263 4820

**Web:** [www.woodgroupsa.org.au/northernturners](http://www.woodgroupsa.org.au/northernturners)



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF NORTHERN TURNERS

NT President, Jan Beare and Mick O'Donnell

Jar in cherry (*Prunus spp.*) with beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) ply segments, by Roy Harris



Ebonised and gilded black ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) platter, 280 x 50mm, by PhillH



Pair of candlesticks in maple (*Acer campestre*), by paul finlay



## Jon Hammond – Serenity Custom Drums

Jon Hammond is the artist behind Serenity Custom Drums, a high-end English drum boutique creating bespoke hand-carved and turned fine percussive instruments from reclaimed, historical woods. With Serenity, Jon gets to combine his love for woodturning and drums.

Last summer, the beloved Eastbourne Pier caught fire and Jon was able to reclaim what little of the 100-year-old decking survived the blaze with help from his local MP, Stephen Lloyd, for bowls only. “Of course, the wood is very weathered ekki (*Lophira alata*), charred and cracked, full of a million footsteps, salt and sand, but its history is immense. Just knowing Churchill alone stood on it is enough for me,” he comments. Thanks to his experience with other reclaimed and ancient wood, Jon already knew how to carve it, so he made one bowl. The Facebook post Jon put online then went viral and he

received over 300 messages in two days.

“I set up my woodturner Facebook page to cope with the influx,” he tells us. Jon now has very little of the pier wood left and demand is still very high. “Each bowl takes a long time to complete,” Jon explains, as he sands to 7,000 grit and finishes with a food-safe wax.

Jon doesn’t describe himself as a traditional woodturner as he treats each piece like a sculpture, only ever working with limited, reclaimed sources of wood. He prefers to leave as much evidence of whatever life the wood has had in his work as possible. Find out more about his work by seeing details below.

**Contact:** Jon Hammond

**Web:** [www.serenitycustomdrums.co.uk](http://www.serenitycustomdrums.co.uk)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/jonhammondwoodturner](https://www.facebook.com/jonhammondwoodturner); [www.facebook.com/serenitycustomdrums](https://www.facebook.com/serenitycustomdrums)



TOP: Reclaimed teak (*Tectona grandis*), oak (*Quercus robur*) and Eastbourne groyned greenheart (*Chlorocardium rodiei*) drum kit  
ABOVE: 150mm Pier wood bowl

## Spalted hornbeam bowl

Dear Mark,

Time to say thank you, I think. First, thank you to David Bates for his excellent articles on woods and especially the March issue on less common timbers. A call to David resulted in a bowl blank in spalted hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) winding its way to me. Even though Stiles & Bates only had blanks up to 230mm available in their brochure, David managed to find a 305mm blank for a project I had in mind. Service with a smile!

Secondly, a thank you to your good self for the article on the bowl gouge in the same issue. The bowl gouge is a tool I have watched other people use with admiration but avoided myself. Having read your article several times and put it at the side of my lathe for reference, I put my spalted hornbeam on the lathe and off we went. Although I did get a few tear-outs to start with, frequent short visits to the grinding wheel reduced these to ‘almost’ zero and the surface finish off the gouge was just



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL PROCTER

Michael’s wonderful nutcracker bowl in spalted hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)

great. Much less use of abrasives required will save me a fortune! Thanks once again to *Woodturning* for such great articles. I have attached a photo of the finished product – a great piece of wood.

*Best wishes, Michael Procter*

## Pens for Heroes

Pens for Heroes is a voluntary group whose aim is to give a turned pen to as many heroes and their families as possible as a small thank you for their service. They are also helping to support Help for Heroes recovery centres, workshops and the HorseBack programme, where they can go for therapy and treatment. In addition, the group is helping to support blind veterans by sending them pens to sell to raise funds for the fantastic work they do. However, donations are needed in the form of pens, pen kits, blanks and any turned items that can be sold in these centres’ shops. The man behind Pens for Heroes, Terence Stone, can be contacted through the group’s Facebook page or via email – see details below.

**Contact:** Terence Stone

**Email:** [pensforheroes@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pensforheroes@yahoo.co.uk)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/groups/142002211627990/?ref=bookmarks](https://www.facebook.com/groups/142002211627990/?ref=bookmarks)



JR Gent’s pen kit in gunmetal finish with a silver birch (*Betula pendula*) burl blank, by Dalboy



‘Embryo’, inspired by a David Springett design, inner ball 75mm and the outer is 140mm, by Kiwi



Tinted horse chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) vase, 280mm high, by Georg



# WE DIDN'T JUST CREATE A NEW LATHE WE REDEFINED WHAT A LATHE COULD BE



Premium Bowl and Vessel Lathe



**Sweet  
16**

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# Ideas for illuminated turned objects

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDY COATES



Andy Coates presents the idea of creating illuminated turned objects and here, shows you how to make a wooden lightbulb

## ANDY COATES



Andy is on the Register of Professional Turners (RPT) and is Chairman of the AWGB. He is a professional woodturner and has a workshop and gallery in Beccles, Suffolk.

Andy predominantly makes one-off pieces, but like any jobbing woodturner, is just as likely to be found doing small batch runs, antique restorations or any number of strange commissions. He also demonstrates and teaches turning.

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Quite a few years ago, I dropped a light bulb I was about to replace in the workshop. Now this wasn't a major accident, but it was the source of the seed of an idea, which ultimately leads me here.

While clearing the mess up I picked up the metal bayonet fitting to throw away, but paused as I noticed the interior. Aside from some brittle resin, it was essentially a recess, and woodturners are always making things to go in recesses. A few minutes later and I was turning the most obvious thing I could think of to go in a recess in a bayonet fitting: a wooden light bulb.

I still have that first example. I get it out every now and again when I need a laugh. There were several problems that a single attempt had failed to overcome: wood species suitability, difficulty of turning such a small hollow form without suitable tools, but most of all, why bother if it won't illuminate? A few years later, I dug it out, had another look and began exploring possibilities. At about the same time a friend, John Woods, was busy developing all sorts of things 'woodturnery' and happened by the workshop. We chatted about my wish to illuminate the lamp and over a period of time, the low-voltage LED system was developed and produced. I was

off! I've made a range of illuminated objects since then, but the light bulb remains my favourite by far.

It makes for a good project because it encompasses a range of techniques, not least the making of a hollow form, and provides ample opportunity to further develop the idea of illuminated turned objects. Once you start thinking about it, you won't stop!

If you're eager to turn your first hollow form, why not start small and cheap? The tools are inexpensive, they can even be home made, and if you do make a mess of it, the wood replacement costs are nothing or negligible.

Ideally, your blank needs to be wet wood from a fast-growing species. The summer growth allows more light to pass through the wood. The winter growth rings provide a pleasant contrast and the wood will cut easily and dry quickly with minimal distortion. The base can be made from any suitable blank of dry hardwood. So let's get started and make a wooden lightbulb.



## PLANS & INFORMATION

### EQUIPMENT USED

10mm bowl gouge  
10mm spindle gouge  
10mm parting & beading tool  
2mm parting tool  
5mm parting tool  
3mm straight toothpick-style hollower  
3mm cranked toothpick-style hollower  
6mm gooseneck hollower – used as a scraper  
Jacobs chuck with 8mm twist drill bit  
Strip of Formica  
Abrasives from 180-400 grit  
Cellulose sealer  
Hard wax stick  
Masking tape  
Small blank of hardwood, such as sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) – 90mm

dia. × 60mm thick  
Project light kit  
Thick sack or full newspaper to break the bulb in – ensure to dispose of glass appropriately  
PPE: facemask, gloves, dust mask/respirator  
Project light & power supply – £19 from Woodart Products – [www.woodart-products.co.uk](http://www.woodart-products.co.uk)

### TIMBER REQUIREMENTS

Small length of branchwood from a fast growing tree, such as elder (*Sambucus nigra*) – 80mm dia. × 100-110mm long  
Two light bulbs – bayonet or Edison screw is fine – bayonet donor and one as a template

### ADDING INTEREST

You can add interest to your illuminated project by the addition of decorative features:

- **Texturing** the base
- **Colour** – acrylic, patination waxes, spirit stains, metalised finishes, gouache, etc.
- **Personalisation** – add a dedication or personal message to the base with carving or pyrography
- **Metal leaf** – metal leaf will catch the light from the bulb and create a very appealing look

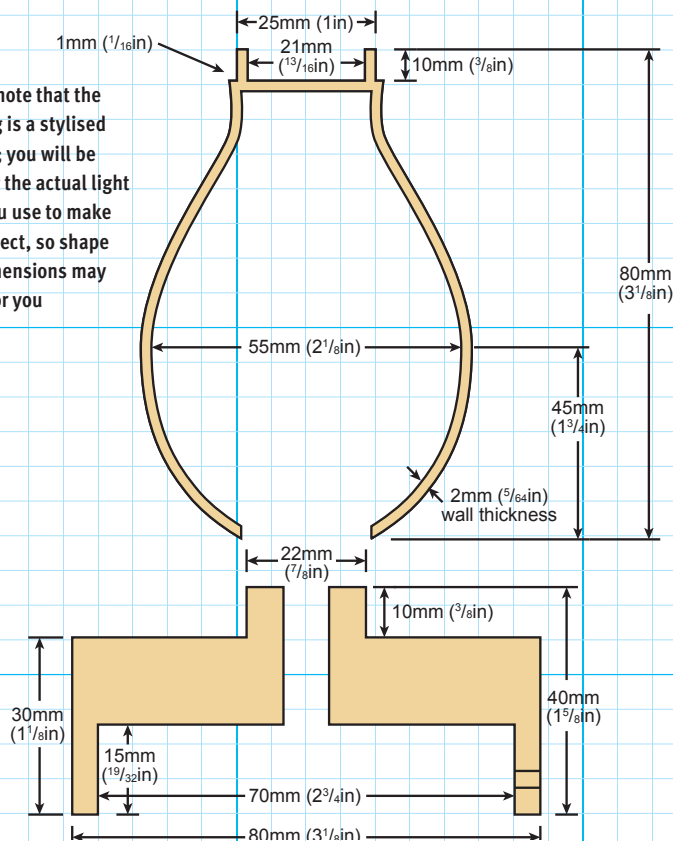
### ABRADING

Abrading is a chore for most of us, but it's a necessary evil. Ideally, you should develop your tool sharpening and tool use to such a degree that you can begin abrading at 120 grit. It will save you money and increase your enjoyment of the process. The convention seems to be that we should abrade to a 400 grit finish, and if this is your routine, then that's fine, but often we over finish certain pieces. A bowl intended for domestic food use perhaps only requires a 240 grit finish? Abrade appropriately for the object's ultimate use. If you are making for gallery sales, then 400-1,200 may be required

### TOOL SHARPENING

Assuming your primary interest is turning wood and not becoming a tool sharpening specialist, then a sharpening jig will save you headaches, time and money, and make the process of turning wood so much more enjoyable. Consider purchasing a jig. Do your research, ask other turners for recommendations and take the plunge. You'll only buy it once but use it every time you turn wood. The advantage, other than ease of sharpening, is that you will become accustomed to the tool behaving in a given way because the grind is the same each time you sharpen a tool. This provides for the development of muscle memory, which engenders a better understanding of how 'your' grind works best

Please note that the drawing is a stylised version; you will be copying the actual light bulb you use to make the project, so shape and dimensions may differ for you



### TIMBER SUPPLIES

With the cost of wood blanks increasing, savings can be made by purchasing, or in an ideal world, sourcing free, freshly felled butts or bough wood. The advantage is not only the cost saving, but the freedom to cut your blanks appropriate for the job at hand. Blanks can be prepped immediately, end grain sealed and put aside to dry, or left in large sections and covered to prevent the weather getting to them. Providing they have air flow and are out of the sun and rain, the degradation will be controllable to some extent. The pleasure of cutting a lovely crotch feature blank from a log and turning a spectacular bowl from it is almost worth the effort on its own



**1****2**

**1** Preparing 'toothpick' style tools for work couldn't be simpler – just a few passes over the top face with a diamond hone. Here, we'll be using two 'toothpick' style tools and another hollower that we'll use like a scraper as a finishing tool for inside the vessel

**2** With your main components ready, two blanks and the low-voltage LED kit, prepare the bulb to provide the bayonet – or Edison – fitting for use

**3****4**

**3** A full-face mask is essential for this step as flying glass will cause harm. Gloves are also advisable. My preferred methods for releasing the bayonet fitting are a heavy paper sack or a full, heavy, newspaper folded over the bulb. A sharp blow from a ball-pein hammer usually does the trick nicely. You may find the glass stem that holds the element intact, in which case, a further carefully aimed blow should deal with it. Clear all the pieces away and dispose of them carefully

**4** Clean out the brittle resin that bonded the glass to the metal fitting. Wearing full face and eye protection, this can be achieved with a small burr or sanding arbor in a rotary-type tool. You are aiming to have the recess – as shown here – clear and ready to accept a wooden tenon. Once cleaned, set safely aside to avoid it getting damaged. The next step is to mount the log section between centres and rough down using a long-ground 10mm bowl gouge. Ensure you remove all the bark and all the cambium layers beneath the bark until you reach sound wood. Turn down to the maximum diameter of your bulb – 55mm – and turn a tenon on the tailstock end to suit your chuck

**5****6**

**5** You are now ready to mount the blank on the tenon in the chuck. Using an identical bulb as a template, mark out the blank to show the five distinct points of the glass bulb. Take note of point 'X' on the photo

**6** Using callipers, take the diameter at point 'X' and using a 5mm tool, make a cut down to a diameter slightly larger than this measurement – you will refine this later

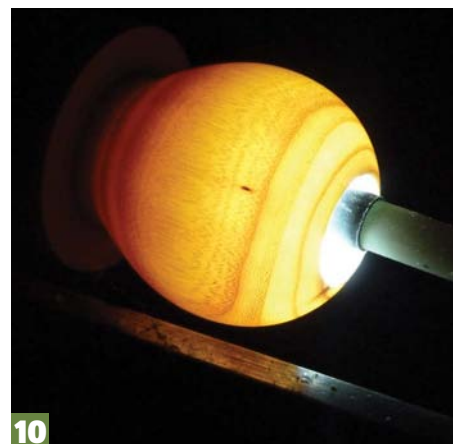
**7****8**

**7** Next, using the second bulb as a visual guide, turn the shape to the tailstock side of the equator line until it matches the bulb. Light cuts with bevel support will help to achieve the shape without cutting too much wood away. Keep the curve flowing rather than faceted. Be careful not to cut the equator line away here; this will ensure you achieve a good shape and don't reduce the overall diameter of the piece

**8** Now mark a recess, 22mm in diameter, on the rounded end and cut a shallow recess. Put a small guide hole at the centre with the corner of the parting & beading tool



**9** Using a Jacobs chuck with an 8mm twist drill fitted, carefully drill through the blank, at least as deep as the last pencil mark. Withdraw the drill and clear the flutes as you go. Bring the toolrest in front of the workpiece. Using the straight toothpick tool, begin to open up the centre hole. Keep the cutting edge on centreline of the workpiece and take light sweeping cuts from the centre hole to the outside edge. As the internal diameter begins to exceed the diameter of the access hole, swap to the cranked-tip tool to get under the shoulder



**10** Set the wall thickness at the opening edge and continue to hollow, making room for the tool to work as you go and maintain the wall thickness as you progress. With the lathe stopped, use a probe light to check your progress. Aim for a minimum of 2-3mm wall thickness, but at least thin enough to allow light to pass evenly through the wall

**11** Once you have completed this section of the interior down to point 'X', use the other hollowing tool as a scraper to clean the interior wall. Move back around to the side of the workpiece and take the diameter of the remaining section down to the same level as that measured in step 6, noting the position of the remaining pencil marks and re-marking



**12** Using the 10mm spindle gouge, complete the shaping to match the template bulb. To complete the last section, take an internal measurement of the inside of the bayonet fitting recess and using callipers, cut this section to size using the 10mm parting tool. This section is effectively a tenon to fit in to the bayonet fitting

**13** Abrade the piece through 120-400 grit, but do not apply sealer. If you wish to abrade the interior, this can be achieved with a pencil wrapped in abrasive. Keep the lathe speed low and take care. Once abraded, part the bulb off just to the left of the tenon. Be aware you are parting towards the 8mm hole



**14** Turn a 22mm tapered tenon on the waste block to fit the original opening in the bulb. Make as tight a fit as you can to enable final refinements to the tenon end of the form

**15** Secure the bulb to the waste block with masking tape, checking the workpiece is properly centred, then refine the inside of the tenon and end face. You may need to use the straight toothpick tool to bring the wall thickness down up to point 'X'. Check the bayonet fitting for fit and adjust. Note: do not run the lathe with the bayonet fitting attached



**16** Now mount the second blank between centres. True up the face and edge and turn a shallow tenon to suit your chuck. Mount in the chuck, turn down to 80mm diameter, abrade, seal, apply hard wax, then buff





17



18



19



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23



24

**17** On the face, turn a recess suitable for your jaws to expand into – 70mm – to a depth of 15mm. Make the surfaces clean and abrade to a finish. Do not seal at this stage

**18** Reverse the workpiece on the chuck. If required, take the depth down to about 40mm. Take a measurement of the original opening in the bulb – which should be 22mm – and turn a 10mm deep tenon to this diameter to fit the bulb snugly

**19** With the bulb removed, make 'V' cuts at the base, top of the side and sand on the outer edge of the upper face, using the Formica scorch detail lines in the cuts. Check everything fits together nicely, then remove the bulb for the moment

**20** Take the LED lamp holder from the kit and using a Vernier calliper, check the widest diameter – it should be around 8-9mm

**21** Using a 9mm twist drill in the Jacobs chuck, widen the hole to fit

**22** Push the LED lamp holder fitting through the hole from the underside until the top face is flush, then using hot-melt glue, secure the fitting in the hole. Hold in place until the glue cools and sets. Using the burr you used to clean the bayonet fitting, cut a slot for the cable. Push the cable in and once again, secure with hot-melt glue. It's better to use too much glue than not enough here. Remember that the base has to sit flat. At this point, you can also glue on the bayonet fitting

**23** Plug the low-voltage power supply into a mains socket; marry the radio fittings together and set aside to take stock

**24** The base can be left plain as we have done here, or you could add some decorative treatment as desired. Here's one I decorated with some pyrography and colour in a style I often use on other objects. Now you've made your first illuminated piece, you can go away and consider where you might take the idea. Enjoy! ●

### SIX WAYS TO TURN BETTER

- Tool sharpening
- Tool presentation
- Understanding how wood cuts
- Consciously developing a sense of 'form'
- Practice, practice, practice – have a coffee – practice some more
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# Laburnum apple



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB CHAPMAN

Very popular in parks and gardens, laburnums are difficult to miss in May when they flower with long drooping racemes of brilliant yellow pea-like flowers. Here, **Bob Chapman** looks at turning apples using this timber

## BOB CHAPMAN



After teaching chemistry for many years, Bob took early retirement to become a professional woodturner, and is a member of the Register of Professional Turners. He was a demonstrator

at the 2009 AWGB Woodturning Seminar and is available for commissions.

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This beautiful laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*) was spotted in 2010, growing on a small green in the Yorkshire Dales village of Long Preston. It is quite large, as laburnums go, and I thought that houses nearby must be very pleased to look out on it when it's in flower. However, by 2013 it had gone – perhaps removed because of its poisonous nature.

In 1894, the case of 'Lemmon v Webb' brought the dangers of the laburnum to public attention when the foliage of Webb's laburnum tree, overhanging Lemmon's field, was eaten by Lemmon's horse, which

subsequently died. Lemmon cut off the offending branches, much to Webb's annoyance. The bad feeling created between them resulted in lengthy court proceedings, eventually going to appeal where the judges finally ruled that Lemmon was within his rights to cut back the overhanging branches, but he must then return them as they remained part of Webb's property.

This is the precedent in English law, which still causes bad feeling between neighbours when the owner of a tree is annoyed that not only has his neighbour cut it back but then, adding insult to injury, he has dumped all the cuttings back over the fence.

All parts of the laburnum are said to be poisonous and there is an understandable fear among adults that their children might mistake the seeds for peas and eat them. In fact, medical records show that in the last century – although some 300 children were admitted to hospital after eating laburnum seeds – there was not a single fatality recorded and it is now thought that the laburnum may not be quite as deadly as previously assumed.

The timber of the laburnum is hard and dense in various shades from a greeny-golden colour to a deep chocolate brown. The sapwood is distinctly different from



A spectacular example of a laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*) tree, although sadly it is no more

the heartwood, varying from a pale almost lemon-yellow to a silvery grey colour. Laburnum has been used for veneers and, it is said, as an 'ebony substitute' although laburnum and ebony are hardly similar in either colour or grain pattern.

As far as turning goes, laburnum is an excellent wood to turn, taking fine detail and a good finish. Because these trees do not grow to great size the timber is rarely available in large logs and sections over about 350mm in diameter are quite unusual. I regard laburnum, alongside yew (*Taxus baccata*), as one of the more beautiful English timbers.

## ❏ A poisoned apple?

Laburnum logs are generally quite small and lend themselves to small scale, finely polished work. A benefit of using small trunks or branches is that some of the sapwood can often be incorporated into the piece to good effect. In this instance, I'm going to use a

small log to make an apple despite the fact that an apple of laburnum would presumably be poisonous.

Before starting it is well worth having a close look at a real apple. The recess where the stalk emerges is actually very deep, the

stalk itself is very thin and quite unattractive. At the other end, the recess is much shallower and the remains of the flower – the calyx – can be clearly seen. Apples are instantly recognisable by their shape, no matter what timber they might be made from.

### TURNING APPLES

Turning apples provides an excellent opportunity for a beginner to practise controlling the bowl gouge.

Start to shape the curve of the apple's top, taking care to keep the gouge's bevel in contact with the wood. Always make the first contact with the back of the bevel, bringing the tool round until the tip just begins to cut, then push the gouge forward in the direction you want to go. If you make first contact with the tip you will cut a groove, which

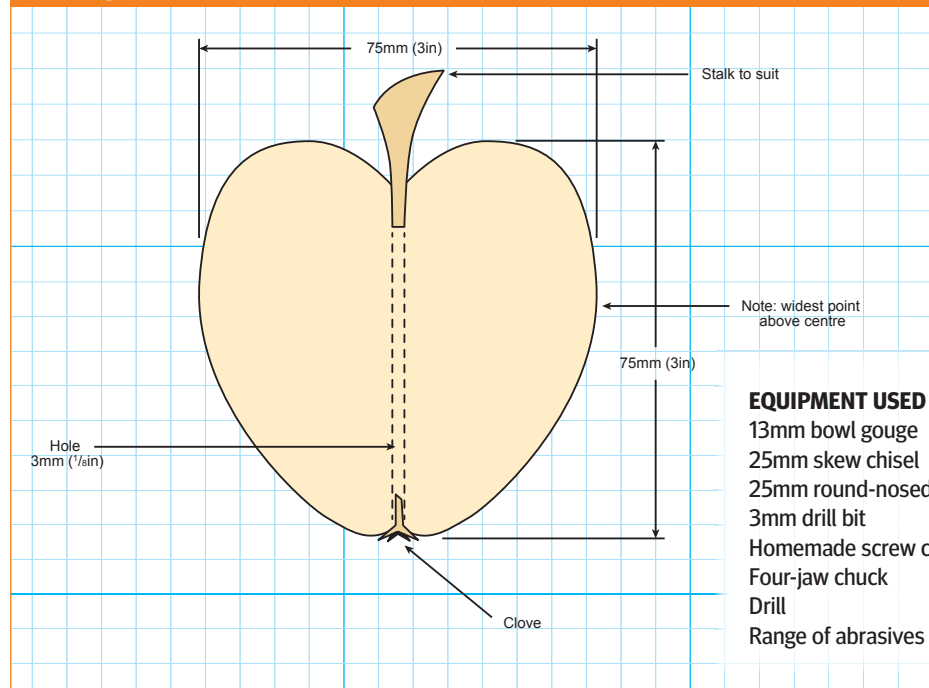
may then be difficult to remove. Imagine a clock face on the tip of the gouge and keep the flute at about 2 o'clock. As the tool cuts around the curve you will have to swing the handle away from you, through an arc of about 90° as shown in step 5. Keep an eye on the depth of cut and try to maintain it as you swing round the curve. Aim for a good shape rather than a perfect surface, although with practice, you will soon be able to achieve both



### ... OR A FRUIT SALAD

Utilising homemade screw chucks of different sizes, you can tackle all sorts of other fruit. Here you can see an apple and an orange, both in stained sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) together with a lemon from pau amerello (*Euxylophora paraensis*), padauk (*Pterocarpus porphyrocardia*) cherries and purpleheart (*Peltogyne dalbergioides*) plums, all showing the natural timber colours. Always study the real fruit beforehand

### PLANS



#### EQUIPMENT USED

13mm bowl gouge  
25mm skew chisel  
25mm round-nosed scraper  
3mm drill bit  
Homemade screw chuck  
Four-jaw chuck  
Drill  
Range of abrasives

CA adhesive  
Pen blanks or contrasting timber for stalks  
Cloves  
Buffing system  
PPE: facemask, respirator/  
dust mask and extraction

## Shaping the apple

**1** Start with a piece of wood, approximately 75mm along each side. It will yield an apple of about the right size. Cut a 75mm length from the log and mark a 75mm circle on the end. I deliberately made this circle offcentre, so as to include some of the sapwood, which would appear as a paler patch on the side of the apple

**2** Rather than trying to cut around this circle, make a series of straight cuts to remove most of the waste. This will produce an approximately circular blank. Mount the blank between centres and turn to round with a 13mm bowl gouge, with the flute at about two o'clock in the direction of the cut







**3** You can now start to true up the laburnum blank and using the long point of a skew chisel, form a dovetail spigot so that the blank can be held securely in the four-jaw chuck. Keep the spigot fairly shallow and of a reasonably large diameter here as it is not waste wood and will eventually be incorporated back into the apple. This end will be the narrow end – bottom – of the apple

**4** The next step is to remove the tailstock and hold the blank in the chuck by the spigot. Mark the widest part of the apple, which will be approximately 45-50mm from the end which is in the chuck, including the spigot. Like everything else about an apple, this dimension is not critical but avoid making it halfway between the two ends. It must be nearer the 'fat' end – top – of the apple

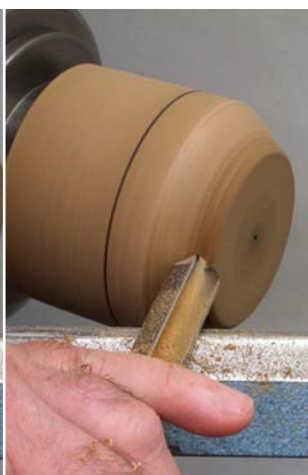
**5** Using the 13mm bowl gouge, remove waste wood from the 'corner' of the blank, gradually working back towards the pencil line with each cut

**6** The next step is to drill a 3mm hole in the centre of the apple to the full depth of the drill. This hole will be used to hold the apple later on and also for the stalk

**7** You can now set the toolrest so the cutting edge of the skew chisel is at centre height when it is flat on the rest. Begin to push the long point of the skew directly down the hole in the apple, so that it cuts a steep sided cone-shaped recess in the wood. Make this as deep as you reasonably can

**8** Still using the skew on its side, remove the corner of the recess so as to round it over and continue the movement of the skew around the apple, taking a light scraping cut back towards the pencil mark. Repeat the scraping action, gently, as much as is necessary to get a smooth and even finish on the apple. Sand the apple from 120 down to 400 grit

**9** The next step is to turn the apple around and repeat the process on the other end but, of course, the end which has just been finished cannot be gripped in the chuck. To overcome this problem a small homemade screw chuck can be used. This chuck is made from a scrap of wood, which has a dovetail spigot on one side and can be held in the chuck jaws. The front face is dished slightly and an ordinary woodscrew is fixed into a hole drilled in the centre using CA adhesive. To avoid marking the smooth surface of the apple, pad the front slightly



### HANDY HINTS

1. Apples and pears make excellent practice pieces and, if well finished, always sell well at craft fairs



**10** Screw the apple onto the screw chuck and tightly up to the dished, padded surface to ensure maximum support. It may not run perfectly true when held in this way, but there should not be any significant wobble and it should be held firmly in place on the screw

**11** Using the bowl gouge, shape this end of the apple, bearing in mind that this end is narrower than the other. The spigot should be gradually incorporated into the body of the apple. If the apple is not turning perfectly true, the two ends will not be concentric and there will be a noticeable discontinuity between them. This is not a great problem as the junction can be blended in when the apple is sanded

**12** At this stage, it is worth taking the apple off the screw and standing it up to get an idea of the overall shape. It is much easier to tell whether the shape is right when you see the whole curvature of the top clearly. Return the apple to the screw, making sure it is up tight to the support and make whatever adjustments to the shape are needed. You can now also finish shaping the bottom of the apple

**13** As before, drill a hole in this end to the depth of the drill and cut a smaller recess with the skew. The deep hole will allow the apple to be reversed on the screw should any minor alterations to the first end be necessary. Sand this end from 120-400 grit, reversing if necessary to blend the two ends together. While the apple is rotating you will feel even the slightest mismatch with your fingertips, so stop the lathe and run your fingers over the surface. Continue sanding until no discontinuity can be detected when the lathe is off. Apply a coat of sanding sealer and leave it to dry

## Turning the stalk

**14** I like to make the stalk from a contrasting timber and find that small scraps of ebony (*Diospyros spp.*) or blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*) are ideal. I also buy pen blanks for this purpose and can get three or four stalks from a single blank. Real apple stalks are very thin and unattractive, so some liberties will be taken in producing a 'stylised stalk'. Mount the blank in the long-nose jaws and turn a section to round using the bowl gouge. The gouge is well over, with the flute at about 3 o'clock and the lower wing at an angle of about 45° to the axis of the work. Use the lower wing to take a planing cut from left to right. At this stage the diameter will be perhaps 12mm or so

**15** When the blank is round, use a round-nosed scraper to form the end into a 'trumpet' shape. Work from right to left, taking the stalk down to a diameter which will fit the hole. Extend the trumpet to the left until it is the right length. This is best judged by pushing the apple onto the stalk as far as it will go







**16** When the stalk is the right length, part it off. It will resemble a golf tee more than an apple stalk and a little more work is needed to finish it off. Once this is done, you can mount a sanding disc on the lathe and, using a slow speed and taking care not to sand away your fingernails, reshape the stalk by sanding diagonally from one side of the 'tee' across to the opposite side

**17** The result should be a stalk that somehow looks much more like a stalk should look, but actually bears no resemblance whatsoever to a real apple stalk. Try it in the apple to make sure you like it, but don't glue it in just yet



## Polishing your apple

**18** For polishing small items, I use the Beall buffing system and I find it works very well. It uses three wheels and three different polishing compounds one after the other. The first two are mild abrasives and the third is pure carnauba wax, which helps to give the final gloss to your turnings

**19** With the apple polished and the stalk glued in with a tiny drop of CA adhesive, finish the bottom of the apple by gluing a clove into the hole. I don't know who first thought of using a clove but it mimics the calyx wonderfully and is a brilliantly simple idea. I wish I'd thought of it!

**20** Your completed laburnum apples should look something like this ●



## HANDY HINTS

- 2.** With the lathe switched off, sanding along the grain will help to blend the two ends together if there is a noticeable mismatch between them
- 3.** Just because a bandsaw can cut circles, doesn't mean you have to. With tight circles I always find it easier to use a series of straight cuts, but often use the same technique on large circles too. Cutting curves wears the teeth unevenly and makes it more difficult to cut an accurate straight line when I need to
- 4.** The skew chisel makes an excellent negative-rake scraper. It is not, as I have been told, a misuse of the tool; it is an alternative use. There are no rules about tool use except one: it must be safe. With that proviso, do whatever works for you. However, be cautious if you are inexperienced because not all dangers are obvious ones and be prepared to take on board different methods that may be faster or give a better finish, or which are safer than the ones you develop yourself



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# Bowl gouge problems

Bowl gouges are a key tool to most turners. **Richard Findley** takes a look at the problems that turners face with this versatile tool

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD FINDLEY

## RICHARD FINDLEY



Richard is a registered UK professional woodturner living and working in Leicestershire. He discovered woodturning while working for his father as a joiner. Richard makes all kinds of work to commission,

from replacement antique components, walking canes and stair spindles, to decorative bowls. It is the variety of work that he loves. He also offers demonstrations and a range of woodturning supplies.

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The bowl gouge is one of the key tools for a woodturner, especially if bowls are your main area of interest. Once proficient with the bowl gouge, you can produce a bowl from start to finish with a single tool, making everything from roughing cuts, shaping cuts, finishing cuts, scraping cuts and shear cuts. As with most tools, there is a steep learning curve and a huge range of variations available to trip up the unwary beginner and even some more experienced turners. The most common bowl gouge problems include:

- Tool choice
- Grind profile
- Bevel bounce
- Catches when entering the rim of a bowl
- Poor finish – tear-out
- Rippled surface
- Pimples and dimples at the bottom of bowls
- Cutting through the side

## Tool choice

As we have seen before, we have tool choice as the first problem when choosing a tool. Manufacturers offer a dizzying array of tools and the bowl gouge is no exception. The options can be split into several areas of choice, including size, flute shape and metal type.



A selection of bowl gouges



## Size

Spindle gouges worldwide are sized by their bar diameter, so a spindle gouge with a 10mm shaft is a 10mm spindle gouge. Simple. In the USA, this system applies to bowl gouges too, but here in the UK, we have a more complicated system, that even manufacturers can't seem to fully understand – and if they don't, how do we stand a chance?

Depending on who you talk to, measuring the size of a bowl gouge in the UK can be based on the width of the flute, or sometimes the measurement of the flute plus one side of the gouge. Basically speaking, a bowl gouge with a 12mm bar will usually be considered a 10mm bowl gouge, whereas in the US, a tool with a 12mm bar will be a 12mm bowl gouge. Confused yet?

To my mind, a UK 10mm bowl gouge – which has a 12mm bar diameter – is the best all-round size to use. This will handle bowls of most sizes, but if you do larger work or deep bowls, then you may benefit from a UK 12mm bowl gouge, which has a 16mm bar diameter, as this has more stability when you reach further over the toolrest. A UK 6mm bowl gouge, which has a 10mm bar diameter, can be useful for smaller bowl work and some finishing cuts, but I must admit to having never found the need to buy one.



Measuring a UK 12mm bowl gouge gives no clue to its actual size

## MYTH BUSTERS:

**Myth – 'Biggest is best! Get a big gouge and get big shavings flying!'**

There are a few issues with going out and buying the biggest gouge you can find. Firstly, can your lathe handle it? Many mini and midi lathes won't have the power to handle the huge cuts that a large gouge is capable of. Secondly, a large heavy gouge is pretty hard work to handle for long periods, especially if it isn't really necessary. Thirdly, what sized work are you intending to do? Large bowl gouges come into their own on large work where the tool overhang can get quite large to reach the centre of the bowl and the longer handle is useful to counteract the leverage forces of turning large diameter work, but if you only intend to turn 305mm or 355mm bowls, there really isn't any need for a large bowl gouge. In my opinion, a 10mm bowl gouge is the best all-round size

## Flute shape

The flute of a bowl gouge is a vital part of the tool's design. Unlike the spindle gouge, the bowl gouge has a deep flute, designed to help clear a large amount of shavings very quickly out of a bowl as you turn it. Spindle gouges tend to remove much smaller amounts of timber at a time, so have much shallower flutes, which gives the smaller tool better stability in use.

There are two main flute designs: 'U'-shaped flutes and 'V'-shaped flutes. The

difference is subtle and some turners will tell you in no uncertain terms that one is better than the other. That one will clear shavings better or achieve a better cut. In fact, both work, but it's more about which you get used to or prefer, than any real science. If you get the chance, try both before you buy. If you don't, then stick to a gouge from your favourite manufacturer and get used to it. Whatever shaped gouge you first buy will most likely be your personal favourite.



The two main flute shapes are 'U'-shaped and 'V'-shaped

## Metal type

When I first started turning, which wasn't that long ago, there was the choice of carbon steel or high speed steel – HSS. Today most tools, but particularly bowl gouges, are available in a range of exotic metals. The problem is I'm no metal expert, far from it in fact, so I have to be guided by what the manufacturers tell me. There is little doubt that these modern exotic metals help a tool stay sharp for longer between sharpening, but naturally this comes at a cost.

Those that specialise in very hard woods or use a lot of abrasive timber, or do production type turning, will no doubt benefit from more exotic metals but I doubt your average hobby turner would notice much difference or benefit from the additional price tag that they carry.

## Grind profile

Next month, I will be looking in more detail at the pitfalls of sharpening, but in an article about bowl gouges, the various profiles that can be achieved can't be overlooked. Grinds vary from 'standard', which has a single bevel and wings that are almost vertical when viewed from the side, to 'long-grind', which can have the wings ground back towards the handle by 25mm or more. Which is best and why? As usual, my approach to finding the perfect grind for my style of turning was pretty pragmatic. I started with a standard grind and gradually took the wings back a little further each time I sharpened the gouge, until it seemed to do what I wanted it to do. Over time, this will have varied a little, but I now use a grind which may be called a long-grind, but is nowhere near as long as



many turners use. I find this grind incredibly versatile and it works for me, but I am aware of the subjective nature of modern turning and realise that this may not be perfect for everyone. The pros and cons of each grind may form a list that would cover several pages, so I'll keep my list concise.



Different grind profiles of bowl gouges. The top and bottom are my personal preference of grind on different sized bowl gouges, the centre is a 'standard' grind

#### Standard grind:

- Many professionals will maintain that a standard grind gives a superior finishing cut when compared to a long-grind version, because of the profile near the tip
- Best used in a push cut, rather than the pull/draw cut or the shear cut
- The upright wings can be a catch hazard if you aren't aware of them as you turn

#### Very long grind:

- Good for pull/draw cuts

- Excellent for shearing cuts because of the long straight wing
- Aggressive cuts can turn into aggressive catches if you aren't aware of just how much wing you are using

#### My 'slightly' long-grind:

- Good for both push and pull/draw cuts
- The wing can be used for shear cuts
- The wing is large enough to take aggressive cuts, but not so long that they can get out of hand



My preferred grind, viewed from above and the side

## Bevel angle

This debate could go on and on – ask 10 turners and you will certainly get 10 different answers. My personal preference is for a 60° angle and to remove the heel of the bevel. I find this is the best all-round angle, giving good access to the inside of bowls of all shapes, giving good control in the cut and offering a high quality of finish. Some turners will swear that a longer angle of around 45° will give a superior finish, but in my experience, it is harder to control and restricts access to the inside of some shapes. Other turners will tell you that you need several different gouges with different profiles and bevel angles for different situations. These turners will certainly have a perfect gouge for every bowl, but must have bigger wallets than me!

I believe that the bevel angle and profile that I use is the best all-round option. I am aware that this probably means that I compromise in some areas, but I am yet to find them!

## Then the problems start...

So, you have finally chosen a tool and ground it to a profile that seems to work, generally speaking you can turn a bowl, but you still get a few problems...

## Bevel bounce

This is a common problem that is hugely frustrating because it can be very hard to understand what is going on. Some timbers are more susceptible than others, but it can happen on almost any species. In my experience walnut (*Juglans regia*) and maple (*Acer campestre*) are frequent candidates.

Bevel bounce happens, usually on the outside of a bowl as you make a push cut around a curve. It makes a knocking noise and may or may not physically make the tool bounce. Either way, the outcome is a less than smooth surface on your bowl. There are three solutions to this problem:

1. Apply less pressure to the bowl. The cause of bevel bounce is too much pressure between the bevel of the tool and the wood, so make sure you apply your pressure tool to toolrest, rather than tool to wood
2. Try adjusting the angle of attack. Sometimes just lifting the handle of the tool a little will naturally reduce pressure between the tool and the timber
3. Remove the heel of your bevel. Softening the heel of the bevel makes the contact between the tool and the timber much more gentle and so the chances of bevel bounce are therefore greatly reduced.



The result of bevel bounce is a series of spiral ridges around the outside of your bowl

## ❏ Catches on the rim of a bowl

Catches can happen at any time when turning. A momentary lapse in concentration and BANG! The most common and probably most frustrating of these catches when turning bowls is on the rim, as you begin to cut into the bowl. There are a number of approaches to reduce or even eliminate this problem altogether: keep your tool sharp – standard advice to solve any turning problem! Present the tool at the correct angle – the tool needs to be on its side – and begin with the flute at 3 o'clock. Only once you are safely in the bowl should you open the flute to around 2 o'clock to achieve the optimum cut. If you start the cut with the flute at 2 o'clock, then the tip touching the wood at an angle can pull it off to one side.

Some bevel angles are easier to control than others: on one occasion, I was demonstrating bowl work at a club and couldn't seem to make a clean entry cut, no matter what I tried. It was only when I got back to my workshop that I realised my bevel angle had, over a number of trips to the grinder, lengthened from my usual 60° to around 45°. I must confess to not fully understanding the reason why 45° should be harder to make a clean entry cut than 60°, but it



A catch on the rim of a bowl

did, which only strengthened my belief that 60° is a better angle to use on a bowl gouge!

Make a safety cut: as a safety measure, I will often make a groove in the position that I want

the rim of my bowl, with the tip of my skew chisel in scraping mode, which gives me a place to locate my bevel and so greatly reduces the chance of a catch.

## Poor finish and tear-out

I covered this problem in detail a few months ago, but it is enough of a problem that it is worth touching on again. As you cut around a bowl, most common on the inside I find, there are two areas that always seem rough, either visibly or just to the touch. There are a few possible solutions here too:

1. Sharpen the tool. You must be fed up of reading this by now, but honestly, sharpening your tool correctly will solve or at least greatly reduce most common turning problems
2. Presentation: often a tiny adjustment to how you present the tool to the wood can make a world of difference. The natural

temptation when turning the inside of a bowl is to keep the tool on its side, with the flute facing around 3 o'clock. By simply rolling the tool by a small amount, so the flute sits around the 2 o'clock position, the geometry at the tip of the tool means the performance of the cut is greatly improved. Try making a cut on some spare timber, first with the tool fully on its side, then further passes, each with the flute a little more open than the last and see the difference it makes

3. Add some finish; the reason that the two particular areas feel rough is because they are where you are cutting against the grain

of the wood. There is nothing you can do about that, it is a physical fact of bowl turning that you will always cut against the grain twice in each rotation of the wood.

In these two areas, the fibres of the wood are being lifted in the wrong direction, by applying a coat of the finish you intend to use on your finished bowl – whether that is oil, lacquer, sanding sealer or wax, it doesn't really matter – it will get into the wood and support those difficult fibres, allowing them to be cut by your freshly sharpened and correctly presented gouge, which should combine to produce an almost perfect finish.



The familiar sight of tear-out on the inside of a bowl



The flute position is described as if the flute is looking at the face of a clock. 10 o'clock or 2 o'clock are the most common flute positions for the best results



Applying finish to difficult areas will often help to improve the surface finish



## Rippled surface

There are several reasons for a rippled or uneven surface after a cut with a bowl gouge. The first is that you haven't moved the tool smoothly enough across the surface. This can only be improved with practice, good body movement and a bit more practice. If all else fails, you could resort to a scraper. Sometimes, however, ripples can be caused by the grind on your tool. Once again, these ripples are seen on the inside of a bowl, most often on bowls with a fairly tight curve and will tend to be evenly spaced. These are caused by the heel of your bevel rubbing behind the cut.

'But the bevel is supposed to rub behind the cut', I hear you say! Correct, but sometimes,

if the bevel is too long it can prevent a smooth cut, in much the same way that a wide bandsaw blade will prevent you from cutting a smooth disc of a small diameter. The back of the blade binds in the cut, forcing the cutting part away from the line that you intend to cut. The only solution is to use a narrower bandsaw blade. This is exactly what is happening with the bevel of the gouge: the heel is preventing the tip from following the curve that you intend and even though you can't feel the problem as you cut, it presents itself as a series of evenly spaced ridges inside your bowl. Reduce the length of the bevel by removing the heel and grinding a secondary bevel.



The ripples caused by the heel of the bevel

## Pimples, dimples, nipples and nubs

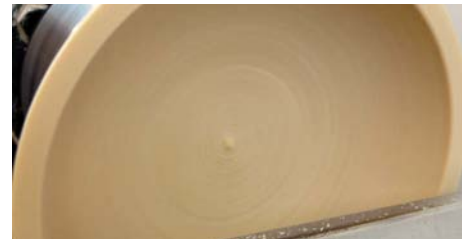
Whatever you call that little bit at the bottom of the inside of a bowl, it's annoying. You find you managed to get the rest of the bowl beautifully smooth and just as you finish the last cut on the bottom of the bowl, there it is again, a little lump or hollow, right in the centre.

There is something of a knack to removing this correctly. The main thing to understand is that the centre of the bowl is spinning much more slowly than the outer edge. While it is all travelling at the same RPM, think of a line of skaters moving in a circle, the centre skater barely moves to turn the same number of rotations as the outer skater, who has to skate very quickly to keep up.

Because the centre spins so much slower, there is no way you can feed the gouge at the same rate across the whole bowl and achieve an even finish. You need to slow down

the speed that you move the gouge as you approach the centre; this gives much more control and an improved finish, it also gives you a chance to position yourself correctly to finish off the cut.

As you slowly approach the very centre of the bowl, the gouge should be very slightly below the centreline, flute facing around the 2 o'clock position – pretending the bowl is a clock face – and you should see the tiny pip that remains just drop off into the flute of your gouge. Because of your slower movement, you will find that you have much more control over the tool and the risk of overshooting the centre – which almost always ends badly – is almost totally removed. Just a few practices should see the end of the problem of pimples, dimples, nipples and nubs.



The pimple left in the bottom of a bowl



The correct way to remove the pimple at the bottom of a bowl

## Cutting through the side of a bowl

While cutting through the side of a bowl is not strictly a bowl gouge problem, it seems to fit here – and it usually is a bowl gouge in your hand when this happens. It is a perennial problem that does become less common with practice, but it is hugely frustrating nonetheless. My main advice is to buy a decent set of callipers and don't be afraid to use them!



Oops! Too thin!

### What can I do if I cut through the bottom of a bowl?

Something I have seen and indeed done myself, is to fit a contrasting or complementary plug into the bottom of the bowl where you may have gone a little too thin. This may well impress non-turners but any turner seeing your work will immediately know why there is a different timber fitted into the base of your bowl, because chances are, they've done exactly the same thing at some point!



Traditional hour glass calliper – right – and the modern Hope calliper – left – which look strange but are the best type I have found for bowl work



Hope callipers in use, the measuring scale shows exactly how much wood you have left

OVERCOMING BOWL GOUGE PROBLEMS • MAKING CLOSED END PENS

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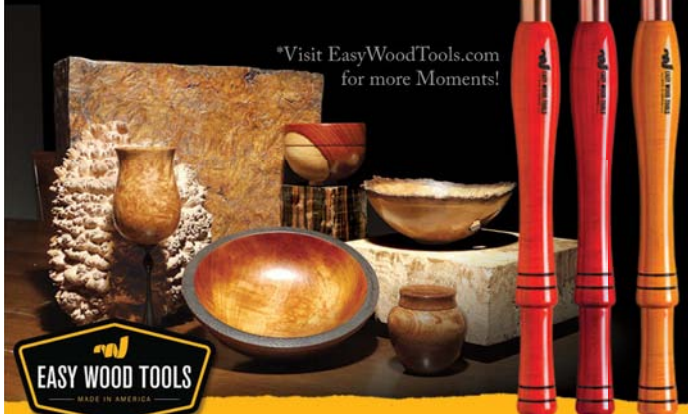
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# Decorative lidded bowl

David Ritchie shows us how to make this decorative lidded box using a variety of timbers

This project started off as a way to use offcuts and a way of learning to deal with the characteristics of different woods and later, inspired by the incredible work of Carlyn Lindsay, I attempted to marry the two. The main secret to segmenting different woods lies in their compatibility regarding hardness and moisture content. This particular project used spalted sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and inserts of iroko (*Milicia excelsa*) and mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*) and a central ring of laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*). The most important part of the turning/construction is the accuracy of the cuts. It was pointed out quite recently to me that if something is done by hand, i.e. carving etc., then the eye travels over the whole piece. However, if it's made using machine cuts, any errors will

stick out like the proverbial 'sore thumb'. This means accurate marking out and building a jig to present the piece accurately and without movement to the radial or chop saw, is paramount.

## DAVID RITCHIE



David is a hobbyist turner who enjoys turning a variety of pieces in different materials. He is the events secretary for Waveney & District Woodturners, which gives him the opportunity

to help newcomers to turning and seek advice from those more experienced members.

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## EQUIPMENT USED

6mm bowl gouge  
13mm bowl gouge  
25mm round scraper  
3mm parting tool  
PVA glue  
Dividers/callipers  
180-600 grit abrasives  
PPE: facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction

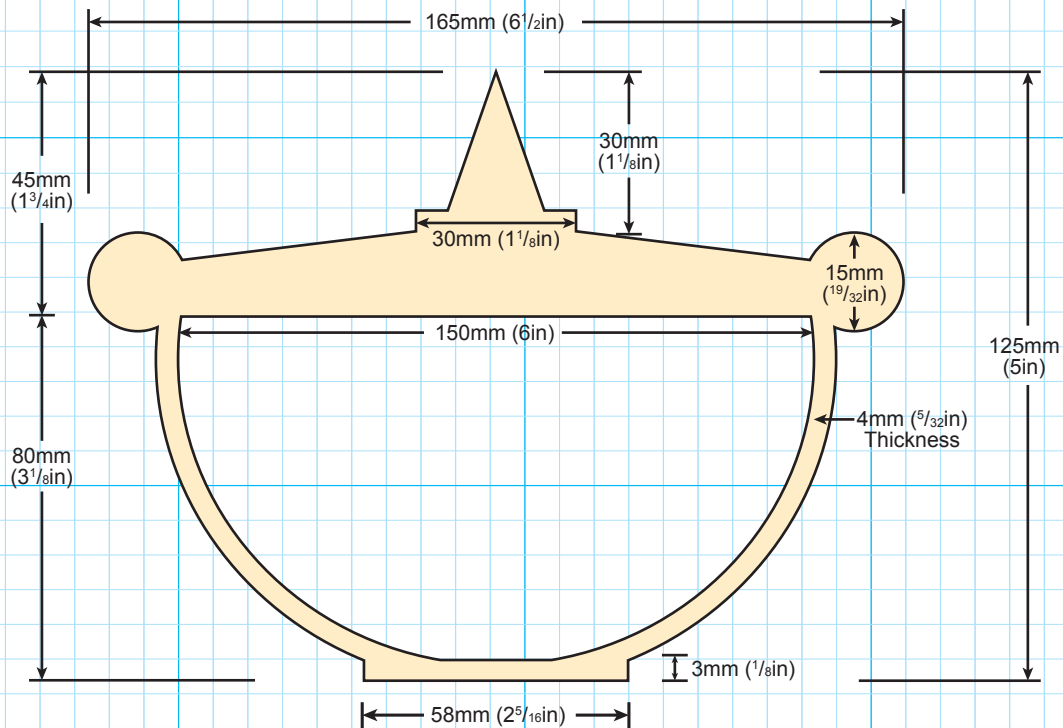
## TIMBER REQUIREMENTS

Spalted sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)  
Iroko (*Milicia excelsa*)  
Mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*)  
Laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*)

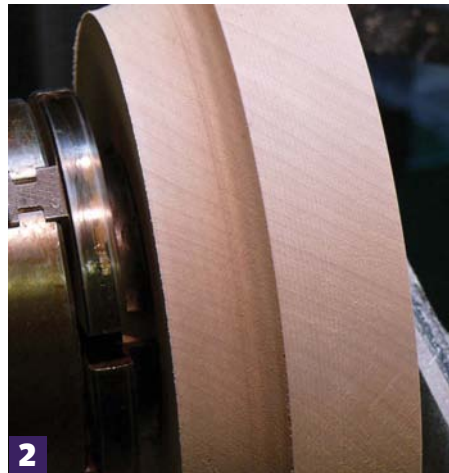


## PLANS

The following are suggested sizes only. Always try to use the 'rule of thirds'. I find that I am limited to the size that my chapsaw can take; however, if you don't have that restriction, the same principles can apply to larger vessels



1



2



3



4

## Preparation

1 This particular piece was made from a large piece of sycamore, which had spalted on one side, but was good on the top face. I find that while spalting makes for a decorative finish, it does not lend itself to fine cuts and inserts, so choose your wood with care. In this case, the spalted section forms the bowl and the solid wood the lid and ring

2 The next step is to mark one-third for the lid, of the box...

3 ... and proceed to shape the top approximately 180mm in diameter and 30mm thick

4 This design is simple, use a protractor to mark every 20°...

## HANDY HINTS

1. Give plenty of attention to making clean cuts and well fitted pieces
2. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, this project looks at using up spare pieces in a decorative manner and creating a delicate ring with inserts. I find this method is not just restricted to small bowls and lids but and also good practice in tool control



5 ... and draw 18 lines from edge-to-edge, ensuring they pass exactly through the centre. Dependent upon which design is used, you could of course use the lathe indexing system. Whatever you choose, make sure you are accurate

## Cutting grooves

6 As a radial arm – choppersaw – is intended to be used to create the grooves, make a simple jig using 19mm ply board with a hole drilled in from one edge; this will allow you to marry up with the centre of the blank and ensure it is the same size as the blank's spigot

7 This enables the blank to be turned on its axis by hand, without moving out of line. Mark 19mm from the top and now proceed to cut each groove in turn, drawing the saw fully out then cutting down to the 19mm line mark

*“... push them fully home and leave to dry”*

8 Because of the radius of the saw blade, this edge would be the deepest cut. Make all cuts and finish approximately the same distance in

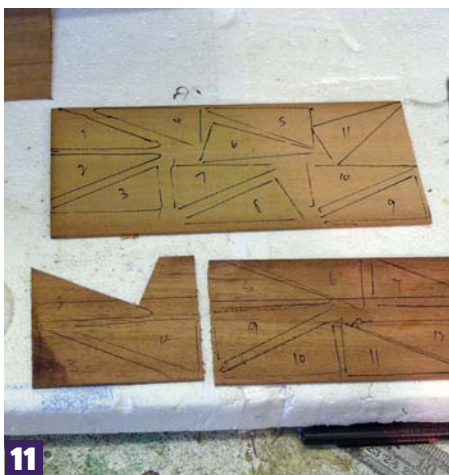
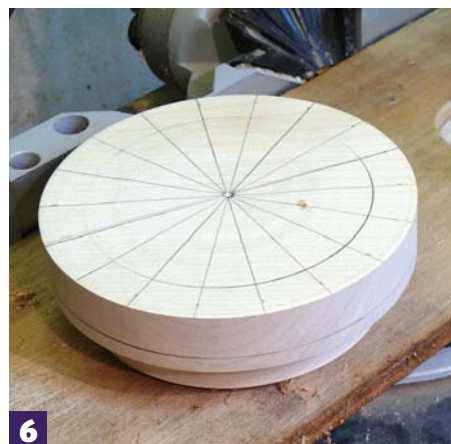
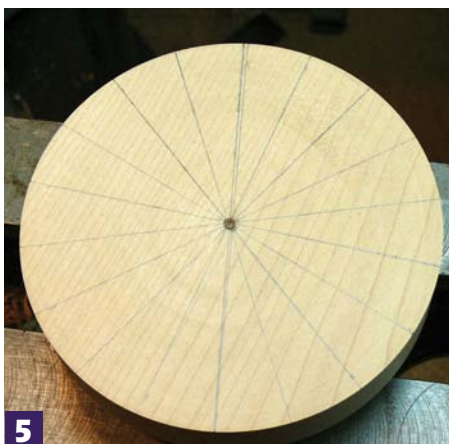
9 We are only interested in the first 50mm of each cut as the rest will be turned away later

## Inserts

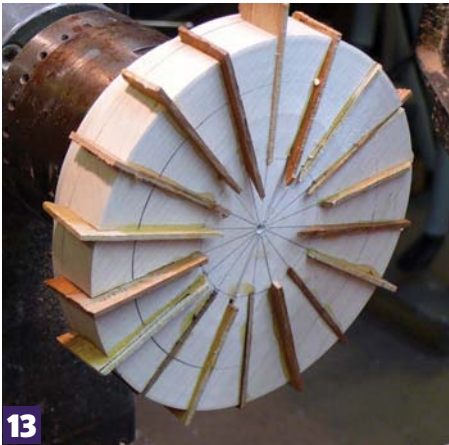
10 Having selected the insert material – in this project iroko and mahogany were used to give alternative colours around the rim – with the saw kerf being 2.5mm, material has to be oversized to ensure a very tight fit. Cut these on the bandsaw and reduce to the required thickness on the planer. You can, of course, cut them closer on the bandsaw then sand by hand, but whichever method you use the fit needs to be tight. Making and cutting the inserts is the easiest part: simply push your material firmly and fully home in a groove and mark round leaving 2-3mm spare for handling. Cut out ‘one’ on the bandsaw and check its fit. Using this as a template, scribe around it, marking out the rest on the insert material. Leave at least 24 hours drying time when using PVA glue and remove any excess glue with a damp cloth

11 I always ensure I have a spare of each material before cutting out, in case of an ‘oh dear’ fit. Apply a thin bead of PVA or any glue that dries clear to the groove and both faces of the insert...

12 ... push them fully home and leave to dry







13



14

**13** When completely dry, remount to the lathe

**14** Using a sharp 6mm bowl gouge, remove the excess until all inserts are flush with the surface

## Forming the ring

**15** The profile of the decorated edge can now be decided. Gently shape and undercut the edge and form an inner edge – this particular shape is best described as a ‘life belt’. It is important to undercut the inside of the ring, which will help to highlight the inserts, prior to parting off



15



16

**16** Before sanding, ensure all joints are good – believe me, one poor one will stick out and spoil the project. Once you are happy with your work, sand off to 600 grit and using a parting tool, cut in from under the rim...

**17** ... just past the ring's width required – this can be measured by the difference between the internal and external diameters of the ring

**18** Finally, cut through from the inside ring edge, which will allow you to complete the parting off



17



18

**19** Use cole jaws to remount the ring and clean up the underside. Create a raised tenon about 6mm in from the edge of the ring and about 4mm high – these measurements are only approximate as they will vary dependent upon the size of the bowl and ring, but must be enough to allow the ring to overlap the edge of the top of the bowl. Should a jam chuck be used, be aware not to create too much pressure from the centre. Remember, you are dealing with multiple pieces of wood and glue at this stage

**20** Clean up, remount the remaining top section and create a groove to receive the spigot from the ring. Measure this carefully because a sloppy fit in the groove is very difficult to correct and you could run out of wood. Reverse the piece and cut a 19mm recess, which will later receive the finial



19



20

## HANDY HINTS

- 3.** Larger platters can be enhanced by using a ring made from different materials and at the other end of the scale, I have used much smaller rings as a foot to promote other turnings
- 4.** Step 19 shows the ring held from the inside on Cole jaws; this is under very little pressure as only a light touch was required. It is much safer to hold the piece from the outside where possible, especially when heavy cutting



21 At this stage, shape the centre section of the lid and create a small spigot to allow it to be reversed. When you are happy with the fit between the centre section and the ring, glue into place and leave under pressure until completely dry. Reverse the piece, clean up the underside and create the recess for the bowl tenon leaving the underside slightly concave and finished to 600 grit



22 Further decoration can now be applied to the centre of the lid according to your personal taste. On this piece, I chose to fit a laburnum ring in the centre. Use a parting tool to cut a groove approximately 6mm wide and 4mm deep. Create the ring from any coloured wood to provide a contrast and set off the piece. You must ensure a tight fit and allow it to dry under pressure

23 Finally, turn the final spigot to fit the recess you created in the lid, glue into place and dry under pressure before shaping. My final was made using scraps from the insert material and glued to a piece of sycamore



24 The turning of the bowl is fairly standard, but whatever shape you use try to apply the rule of 1-3, which is why we cut the top one-third off at the start. Clean up the face of the blank and cut a groove to accept the tenon from the lid. Check repeatedly to ensure a good fit – not too tight

25 Shape the outside of the bowl so that the top edge fits under the ring, again checking frequently. Complete the outside shape creating a foot of approximately one-third of the bowl diameter

26 Bearing in mind this piece was spalted, I chose not to turn the walls too thin and stopped at approximately 4mm. Sand up to 600 grit prior to finishing with oil

27 Use at least three coats, cutting back and allow to dry until you achieve your desired finish

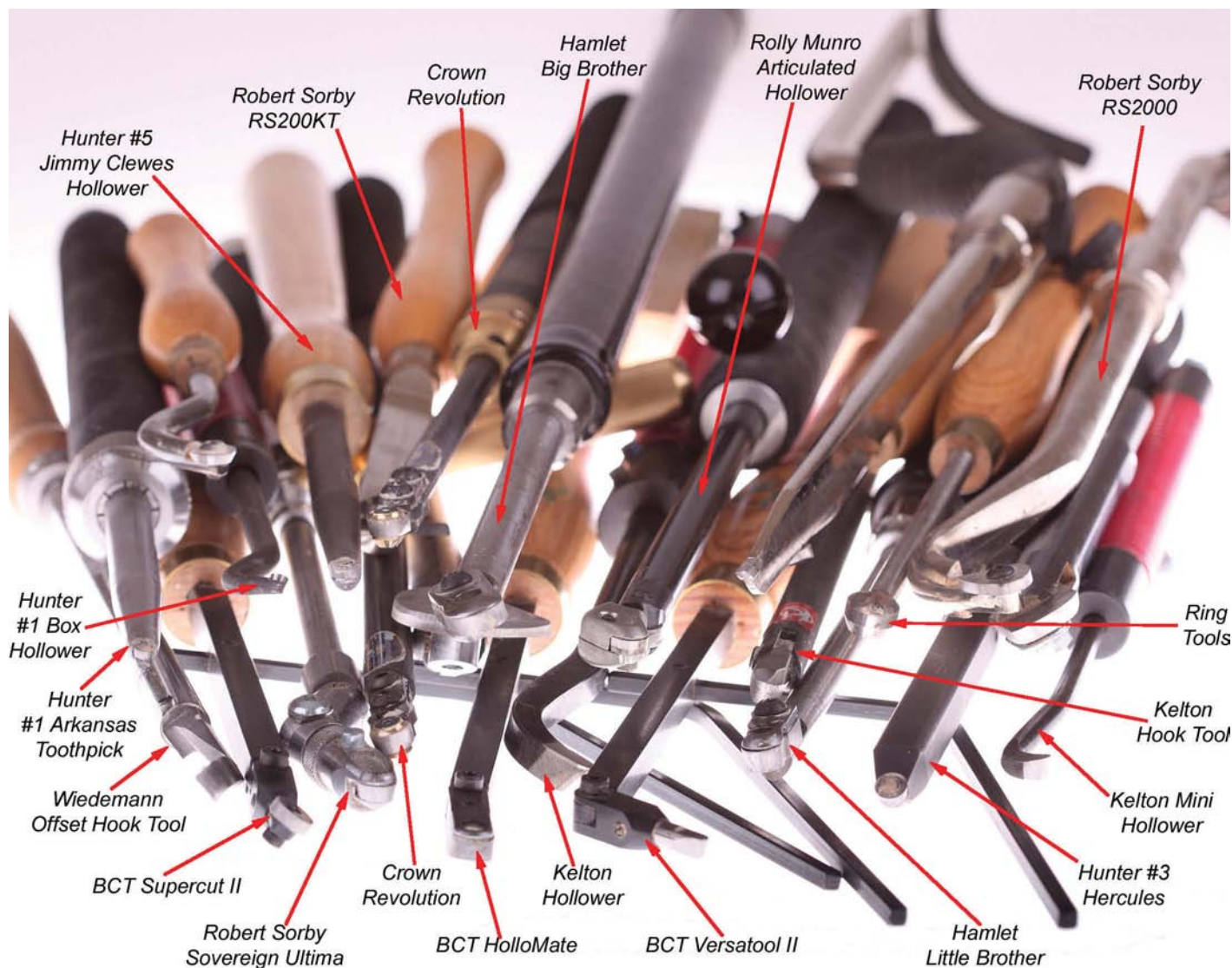
28 The completed bowl should look something like this ●



## HANDY HINTS

5. This article is intended to stir your imagination and encourage you to use different woods to enhance your piece. It is not necessary on all lids to remove the 'life belt' but should you do so, exercise extreme care as it is very delicate. If decorating platter edges, ensure you have maximum thickness once the profile has been defined; this will enable you to insert other woods as large as possible before turning the profile and sanding off





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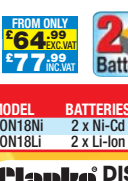
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# Routing on the lathe

## — part 4

In the previous articles in this series, our Editors have examined ways of routing external decoration on the lathe. This time, they go inside and find it isn't quite so easy!

Whereas it is relatively straightforward to move a router along the outside of a spindle, vessel or bowl by using a shield around the cutter as a guide or using a template to run the base of the router setup against, internal curvature is rather more problematic, as we will demonstrate here. We are talking about shallow bowl or platter shapes, which seldom have a regular concave internal shaping. So, we need to consider two possible solutions. One, for a non-regular arc and two, for a regular arc profile. A vessel with a 'return' lip would pose a problem and would probably be impossible for the cutter to reach inside.



1 The first thing that became evident was the ready-made aluminium routing device with its flat-fronted base and lack of a central row of bolt holes for rotational purposes, ruled it out as means of doing this work. However, you could fit a secondary base underneath and drill it to secure it and with a central row of holes. Instead, the homemade setup held more promise. The bolted on, twin contact points could be removed and the slightly flat nose on the base could be rounded, so it would run more precisely against a template. It is important for the cutter to be presented to the workpiece in a similar arc to the bowl profile



## Template method

2 The first method we tried was to mimic a non-regular curve using a template, which was drawn by guesstimate on a thin piece of ply and reshaped on a disc sander until it fitted side-to-side. It seemed to be a good fit...

3 ... but when we cut out the actual template, it didn't seem to be exactly the same from side-to-side. Instead, a half template proved much more reliable and it could, in theory, be flipped over to draw out a full 180° mirror image template

4 However, an early attempt at using the template was adrift from the shape we had drawn out. We needed to find a better way of following the curve. So a piece of spray-mounted paper was used with the stationary cutter tip rubbing inside the bowl and a felt-tip pen used to draw marks on the paper

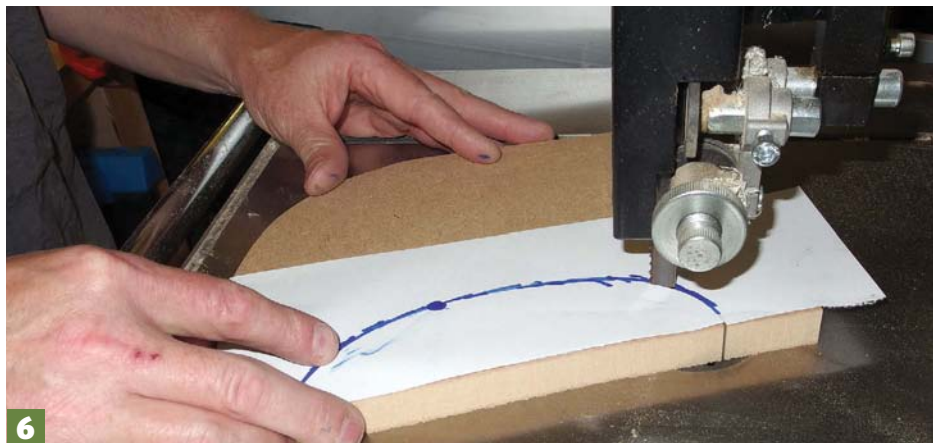
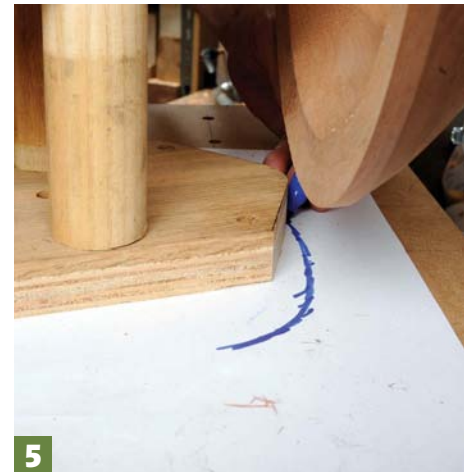
5 Here you can see the felt-tip pen marking against the rounded 'nose' on the base of the routing device. The device is moved around and more marks made and then joined up to create a continuous curve

6 The curve was then cut out carefully on the bandsaw and the edge cleaned up with the help of a fine rasp. The trick was then to clamp it carefully in the correct position to the MDF base, which was fixed on the lathe bed. You may have spotted the fact that the curve we cut out doesn't allow for the cutter projecting into the bowl. This can be adjusted on the drawing before cutting out so the curvature matches more closely

7 Once the template is cut, you need to position it. We found this to be fiddly and it requires a bit of trial and error and dry fit runs to get it in the right position. Once done, it needs to be securely fixed in place. Once this is done, remember to keep the pressure down so the baseplate stays on the platform and into the template, so the jig does not deviate from the cut template

### HANDY HINTS

1. The template method gives more flexibility as far as working on a variety of curves is concerned, but it is fiddly to get the initial template the correct shape and also in the correct position to give you the depth of cut required on the surface being cut. You may go for even depth of cuts or adjust so you get graduated depths
2. Be mindful not to let the cutter jump – keep an even cut rate and create a pattern that does not create cuts coming too close together. By doing this, you minimise grain breakage





## Rotation method



7



8

7 This is, in theory, easier to get right if your bowl has a constant or nearly regular internal curve. The homemade jig had a handy set of holes, which we could use to hold it down to the baseboard with its underneath T-nuts

8 A bit of experimentation showed us the most likely position to bolt into. Swinging the device from side-to-side before making and switching on, seemed to work but it was slightly 'heart-in-the-mouth' until the first pass was made for real

9 Spurred on by the success of the first cut with a 60° bevel bit, we adjusted the position on the register plate behind the chuck and made a second pass...

10 ... and a third – this was proving to be easier than we thought. Any slight depth variation didn't seem to be a problem

11 The result so far, stopping and switching off at the end of each pass not overrunning the centre point. It was obvious we couldn't do intermediate passes without ruining the middle where they would all meet up

12 So, we did a series of intermediate stopped passes instead. The cuts were quite neat – there was just a bit of fluffing at the rim of the bowl, which needed to be rubbed off

13 A very promising result, but we didn't want to stop there. There was still scope for more experimentation

14 The next trick was to adjust the rotation point on the base of the device so the centre would cut deepest and fade out quickly as it went outwards

15 Here are the combined techniques to show what can be possible. Obviously, you need to try for yourself and pick the effect that works best for the turned piece you want to decorate with extra detailing ●



9



10



11



12



13



14



15





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# Making closed end pens

Carrying on with his series, in this issue, **Walter Hall** looks at tips for making closed end pens



PHOTOGRAPHS BY WALTER HALL

## WALTER HALL



Walter Hall is a woodturner who has specialised in making pens and pencils for more than 20 years. Based on the beautiful Northumberland coast in the UK, Walter sells his bespoke pens and pencils through local craft centres and via his website.

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[www.walterspens.co.uk](http://www.walterspens.co.uk)

Not everyone will be familiar with the term 'closed end' to describe a pen, so before I begin to describe the tools and techniques, I shall explain what is meant by it. Depending upon the type of pen you are making, all kits come supplied with components that form the nib assembly,

centre band, couplers, clip, finial and endcap. A closed end pen is one that has been modified to do away with the need for a metal finial and perhaps also the clip and endcap. This frees the maker from the constraints imposed by the components and allows a more personal interpretation of the design. In pen making circles, a pen that has been modified in this way is referred to as 'closed end'. I will be looking at closed end barrels in this article, dealing with caps and clips will be covered in more detail in another article.

## Different types of mandrel

If you have only ever made pens using a standard mandrel and bushes, or turned between centres, you may now be wondering how this can be achieved when it will not be possible for the mandrel to go all the

way through the blank. As with all forms of woodturning, the way in which the work is mounted on the lathe is the first consideration and many ways have been devised of supporting closed end pens, ranging from comparatively expensive expanding mandrels, purpose designed for a particular kit or tube size through pin chuck mandrels, to home-made jam chucks. My personal preference is to make closed end pens using my own jam chucks so I do not own any proprietary mandrels; however, I am grateful to my friend and fellow pen maker Ray Fowler who kindly lent me his expanding mandrel and pin mandrel for this article.

Let's look first of all at how these different types of mandrel work:

### Expanding mandrel

The expanding mandrel consists of a hollow tube through which a rod passes that is threaded to take a nut and this assembly



is mounted through a Morse taper fitting. The mandrel is shaped to take a silicone rubber tube, which is compressed in length when the nut is tightened, causing it to expand in width to grip the inside of a 7mm or 8mm pen tube. This type of mandrel is readily available from UK suppliers for about £20 or so. Metal expanding mandrels are also available in the USA to fit specific pen kits but, unfortunately are not so easy to find in the UK.

### Pin chuck mandrels

Pin chuck mandrels are more normally made by users, or their metal working friends, in their own workshops and consist of a metal or acrylic rod turned down to fit the internal diameter of a specific sized pen tube. A flat is then filed on one side of the rod to take a pin which, when the blank is fitted and turned, jams the tube in place until it is turned back in the opposite direction.

### Wooden jam chuck

A wooden jam chuck is simply made by placing a suitable offcut of wood in a chuck and turning it down until it is a friction fit in the pen tube. A slight taper – which is wider at the chuck end – will ensure that once it is pressed into place, the blank will not slip on the jam chuck but can be easily removed when the work is complete.

## Making a closed end pen

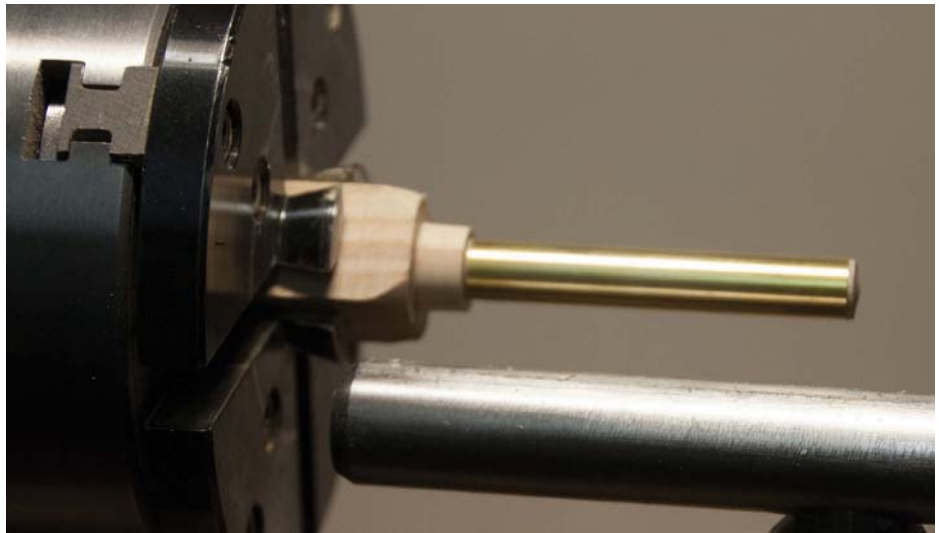
The method of making a closed end pen does not vary much from one type of mandrel to another so, over the next few pages, I will explain the method I use and some of the important factors to consider in the design and making.



A 'Grabber' expanding closed end mandrel

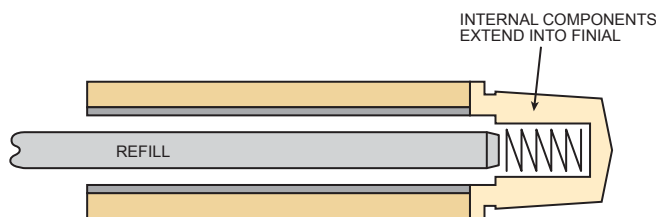


A home-made pin mandrel

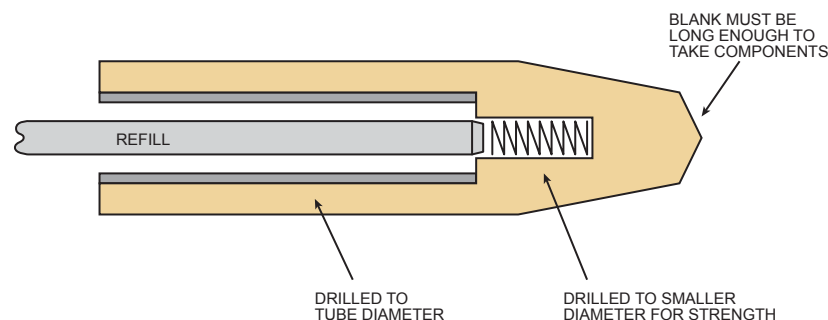


A wooden jam chuck mandrel

### ORIGINAL KIT



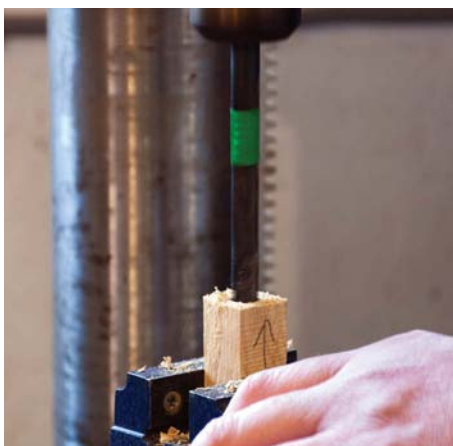
### CLOSED END



### Length of blank

The very first consideration is the length of blank required. This will need to be long enough to accommodate the cartridge, ink pump or rollerball refill – and spring – and will need to be as long as the original brass tube, plus an amount to accommodate any part of the internals that extended into the original finial fitting as shown in the drawings. Don't make the mistake I did of just making the blank slightly longer than the brass tube and hoping for the best as you will inevitably find that the parts will not fit. Measure carefully and design accordingly. While an over-long bore is not a problem for fountain pens, rollerball internal length is particularly critical if the correct writing pressure is to be achieved.





Mark the drilling depth with tape around the bit

### Drill the brass tube

Once you have measured and cut the blank to length, the next step is to drill it for the brass tube. This is no different to drilling for any other kind of pen kit except that you need to drill to the specific depth required and is easily achieved by marking the depth on the drill bit with tape.

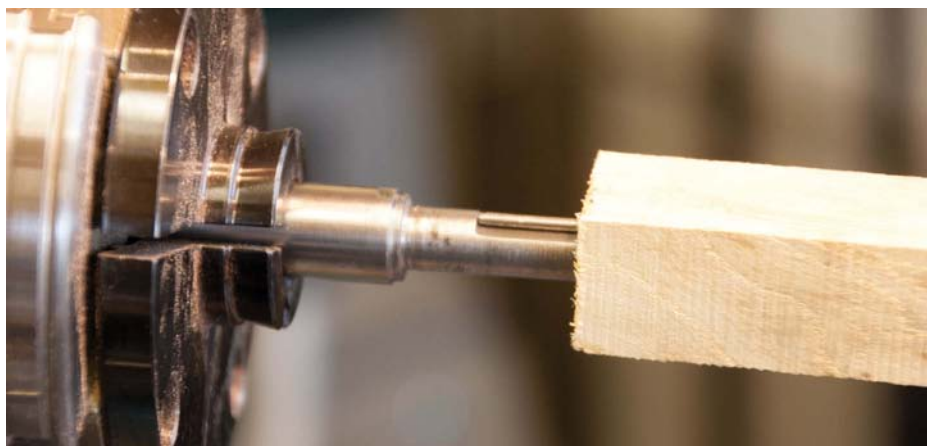
### Preparing the blank

The tube must then be glued in place in the normal way and the end of the blank squared to the tube. Using a jig and disc sander is not an option here as the jig cannot pass through the blank so a barrel trimmer is perhaps the best way. Do not make the mistake of thinking that the blank can just be squared off using the mitre fence on a disc sander. Unless the hole for the tube is absolutely true to the sides of the blank, which is almost impossible to achieve, then squaring off in this way will not result in a truly square end leaving a gap when the pen is assembled.

Another option is to turn the barrel to a cylinder on the closed end mandrel before squaring off, in which case, the end can then be squared on a disc sander or mounted in a collet chuck or a scroll chuck with pin jaws and trued up with a skew chisel or parting tool.

### Mount on mandrel

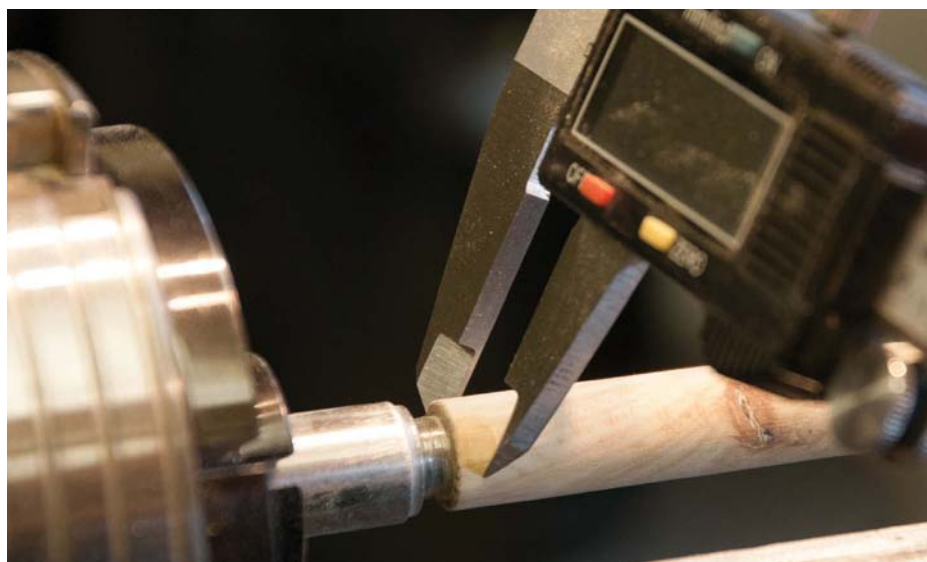
The prepared blank is now mounted on your mandrel and tightened in place as appropriate. An expanding or pin-chuck



Mounting the blank on the pin mandrel



Blank mounted on the 'Grabber' mandrel

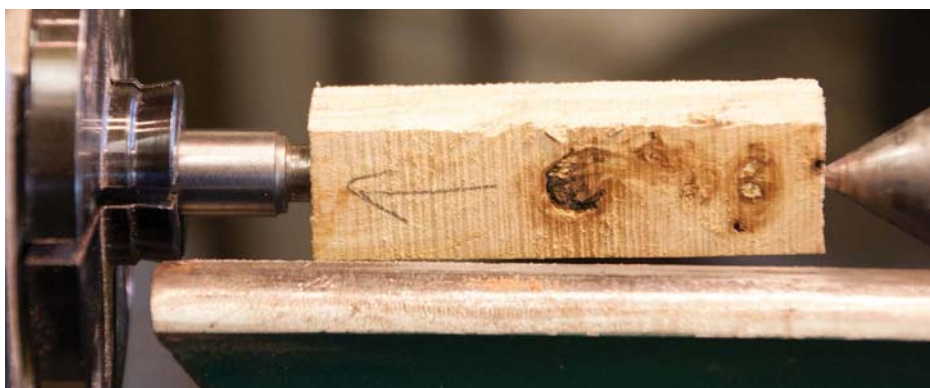


If you cannot use bushes, then measure with callipers

mandrel may be designed to allow the use of bushes but if you are using a homemade jam chuck, you will need to measure the diameter of the open end of the barrel with callipers.

### Supporting the blank

Using a suitable revolving centre in the tailstock, support can be provided for the outboard end of the blank right up to the point at which it is parted off. With the lathe turned on and running at a slow speed, bring up the tailstock and engage the revolving centre with the work. Do not expect the point of the centre to align exactly with the centre of the blank; it must align with the axis of the tube, which, as I have already explained, may not be exactly in line with the sides of the blank. You can turn the barrel to whatever shape you wish, but take care not to cut too deeply and break into the bore of the blank or cut too short leaving an open end. The latter is of course recoverable by reverting to the original fitting, but still rather frustrating.



The blank mounted on the lathe and supported by the tailstock



### Potential weakness

Another matter to consider is not to create excessively thin walled sections of blank beyond the end of the brass tube as this may cause a weakness that will manifest itself with a catastrophic collapse when you attempt to press the centre band components into place. It is worth considering at the drilling stage whether to drill first for the length of the tube and then to a smaller diameter to accommodate the end of the pump or refill, thus leaving more wood and a stronger blank.

### Finishing your pen

Once the desired shape is achieved the end may be parted off and finishing can begin. You may wish to do any heavier sanding before parting off while the blank is still supported by the tailstock, but this is not strictly necessary as the mandrel should grip the blank adequately for all finishing operations. You can apply any finish you choose just as you would on a normal mandrel and then press the components together in a pen press, or by whatever means you normally use. The cap end is turned in the normal way on a standard mandrel or between centres. ●



All finishing work can be completed on the mandrel



A closed end slimline pen with beads and texturing



Cleaning up the parted off end with a skew chisel



An Omega fountain pen in Midnight Reef acrylic



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# John Lucas in profile

Previously a Radar Technician in the Air Force, we speak to **John Lucas** to find out how he got into woodturning

John Lucas hasn't always had a woodturning career in mind, but it was through his previous jobs that he was led to try his hand at it. From 1968 to 1972, John served in the Air Force as a radar technician before attending college, where he majored in Physical Education. John's four years in the Air Force led to him having a number of jobs in electronics repair. After he graduated from college, he worked as a photographer at Tennessee Tech University, having previously taken a camera repair course at National Camera Repair. John worked as a photographer for 26 years, photographing everything from snakes and bug larvae to homemade lightning, engineering projects, sports, artwork of silver, glass and ceramics, and, of course, lots of woodturning work.

## Background

It was around 1980 – after he had graduated from college – when he bought a Shoptsmith, a multi-tool which, fortunately, had a lathe as an option of the tool. At the time, John only had an apartment and the Shoptsmith was kept in the back bedroom. He made sure to cover the floors with wood and taped joints and the air conditioning vents with extra filters. Being setup in an apartment, one might imagine the sound from the lathe might carry, but John tells us he made sure to tell the neighbours that if he made too much noise and bothered them, they should call him and he would stop. Luckily, no-one ever called, even when he ran the planer. It was very useful for John that he lived near woodland, hence wood to turn was free.

While working at Tennessee Tech, an area of the University was the Appalachian Center for Crafts and it was there that he met Joe Looper. Joe introduced the budding turner to the modern turning techniques and John also had the opportunity to meet a great number of turners who visited the centre. John credits his greatest influences as being those who believed in him when he first became serious about woodturning, saying: "Oh, without a doubt it's all the friends I've met while turning." These include John Jordan, Betty Scarpino, Clay Foster and, of course, the late Joe Looper. Although they came late in his career, John tells us that Mike Hosaluk, Stephen Hogbin and Frank Sudol really helped him understand all the unique directions in which the hobby can go.



Woodturner John Lucas

Turning soon became John's main interest. Not promoting himself on purpose, he teaches and writes articles, does instructional videos and 'spends far too much time' on the web, answering questions about turning. With his background in photography, he also makes sure to put lots of photographs of his work up online, to share with others.

## Inspiration

"If I'm really honest, I love tools and machinery," John comments when answering

our question on what inspires him. Originally, he always wanted to find his voice as a photographer, but he feels he never really found it. Woodturning, however, allowed John to express himself in the variety of work that can be done. It also helps that he feels the hands-on pride of saying: "I made that," when referring to his work.

John feels the best thing about woodturning is holding something in his hands that he created and that he's carried a piece into his office and someone in the

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN LUCAS





A selection of John's turned mirrors



'Cardiac Lamp'



'Love Doesn't Know Boundaries'

hall looks astonished and asks "you made that?!" He tells us: "In that kind of situation, a very big smile erupts on your face and makes your day."

A great career high for John was when he did a demo for an elementary school class. He was making a spinning top and added chatter work. He tells us: "One girl was really excited and I found out later she was deaf and could feel the vibrations and got to enjoy the 'noise' like the other kids. That was a lifetime memory for me," he tells us.

However, it's not all about the highs. John tells us the biggest low within woodworking is "losing older turning friends."

### Turning style

John feels unsure he can say he has a style in his woodworking, as he tries turning everything and because each piece he makes is different. He feels that one of the most fascinating things about turning is learning, saying: "There's so much out there and each day brings a new experience - I try it all."

John is mostly known for his hand mirrors, which he has always found fun to produce, with a "million" different directions to go. Not only is he known for his mirrors, but his micro miniatures too. He tells us: "I've turned a goblet as small as the full-stop at the end of this sentence." Alongside these small gift pieces, John has been working on one-of-a-





'Cupcakes'

kind conceptual pieces as well. He tells us that he has jokingly said to a crowd before that he has no style, which "unfortunately draws laughter and agreement."

The time John will spend on a project can vary greatly; from three to four minutes on a wine stopper, or 100 hours on something as complicated as a gun cabinet.

When it comes to this turner's favourite woods to work with, he just loves big leaf maple (*Acer saccharum*) burl, feeling that maple is the most fun to turn, because it turns so well. He mostly turns local hardwoods, such as maple, cherry (*Prunus serotina*), walnut (*Juglans regia*), mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*), osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*) and black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*).

### Workshop

John's workshop is currently in a two-car garage, with barely enough room to walk between machines. Admitting he's a 'tool nut', he explains: "My workshop is as much a part of the hobby as the turning itself." When doing a job, having the right tool for the job is always a priority for John. He has been collecting and upgrading tools for 30 years, saying it's a lot cheaper than buying a bass boat. He now has a large collection of antique hand tools and carving tools, which are often put to good use. John has had as many as seven lathes, including a foot-powered version, but currently he is down to four: a Dremel micro lathe, a Smithy metal lathe, a Powermatic 3520 and a Delta Midi.

John explains: "I have just about every tool out there and if you took away any one of them, I would simply find a way to do it with



'Basketweave Mirror'



'Mayan Mirror'





John turning at one of his lathes



'The Redistribution of Wealth'

## LIKES

- Playing with new tools and cutting techniques
- Watching the wood take shape with a good sharp tool
- Designing pieces
- Trying new processes
- To quote the *A Team* – I love it when a plan comes together!

## DISLIKES

- Narrow-minded people
- Rotting wood
- My chainsaw getting stuck in a downed tree
- Tools falling point first on the concrete floor
- My computer going down, which means I'm unable to communicate with other turners

another tool." John sometimes looks back at pieces he made 20 years ago and wonders how he made them, because of how limited his tool collection was back then. We asked him what tool he couldn't do without, to which he replied: "Well, I would have to say my brain."

## Typical day

A typical day for John starts very early, telling us he is "often up by 5am." Once up, he will be at his computer, checking what's happening on the forums, then checking again every time he goes back into the house. He will then head to his local fitness centre before it's time for "playing in the workshop," which usually takes John up to lunchtime. During the warmer months, he will often go for a 20 mile bike ride in the afternoons.

Through his constant checking of the forums, this may lead to some experimenting in the workshop to answer a certain question. He will certainly dedicate time to a project, saying: "If I'm involved in a project, I might spend 12 hours or more in the workshop."

## Future

John plans to spend more time working on the conceptual pieces and one-of-a-kind hand mirrors. He tells us: "I have literally 100s of drawings and sketches and hope to have enough time to build them, or explore the ideas that came from these concepts."

He has also just started working with blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*), saying: "It's fantastic, but very expensive." He would also like to get his hands on more boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*), because he's doing more thread chasing, but it's hard to find it locally. We asked John if there was a new form of woodworking he'd like to try and he tells us: "I'm fascinated by Rose Engine work and use a router to sort of imitate that, but I would really like to build a Rose Engine lathe to play with. I am always learning more about carving, so I would like to do more of that as well." ●

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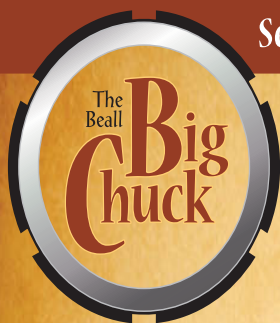


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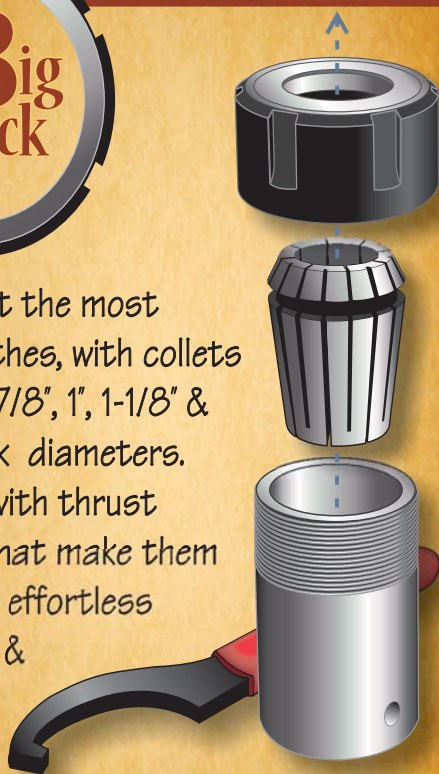
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# Cutting board from offcuts

**John Swinkels** makes a cutting board from offcuts as well as showing how to make a useful beam compass

The following steps describe and illustrate how to make cutting boards from tough and heavy eucalyptus (*Eucalypt spp.*) wood offcuts. I also explain how to make a useful beam compass and how you can make feet from silicone sealant, which is more commonly used in kitchens and bathrooms. However, you can substitute eucalyptus wood with any suitable hardwood from your area.

## JOHN SWINKELS



After 11 years of turning, John still considers himself an advanced beginner, as he continues to learn and experiment with various techniques. He has combined turning with leather and incorporated pewter as a decorative element. John says that the possibilities are unlimited and the enjoyment of the practice is still there, especially because much of it is done in the company of other more talented turners.

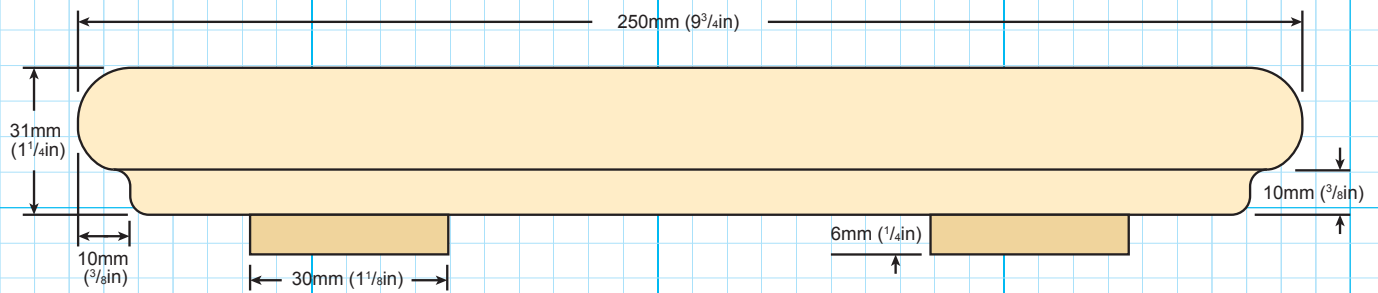
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PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN SWINKELS





## PLANS



## EQUIPMENT USED

Parting tool  
Skew chisel  
Spearpoint-shaped chisel  
10mm detail gouge  
Cabinet scraper  
Silicone sealant  
Sealant gun  
Paper  
Beeswax  
Bandsaw  
Drill press  
Frying pan

## Abrasives

Spindle roughing gouge  
Flat scraper  
30mm drill bit  
Inside outside callipers  
PPE: facemask, respirator/dust mask  
and extraction

## TIMBER REQUIREMENTS

Timber: Eucalyptus (*Eucalypt spp.*)  
Scrap wood



**1** Choose a suitable hardwood blank for this project – here I am using eucalyptus, but I am unsure of the exact species. It may be Sydney blue gum (*Eucalyptus saligna*) as that is common in my area, but it could also be a grey gum. Even though the name ‘blue’ suggests something else, the wood of the blue gum is actually pink to red. Like many other eucalypts, this section is hard and heavy, the equal of English oak (*Quercus robur*) in strength. If you are using eucalyptus to make your cutting board, you should get rid of some of the tannin by boiling the turned board in hot water. As you can see, the grain pattern in my eucalyptus blank is quite attractive. Two other commonly used hardwood timbers in my local area are blackbutt (*Eucalyptus pilularis*) and spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*). These are more straw in colour. As mentioned before, any hardwood offcut can be used here



**2** This is a homemade beam compass which, because of its simplicity and effectiveness, may be of interest to other woodworkers. Over the next few pages, I will take you through the steps for making your own version

**3** A 19mm diameter tube has one end plugged with a 25mm dowel. A hole is drilled in the dowel from the end. A thumb screw that goes into the hole holds a pencil that is slipped through a hole, drilled from the top through the tube and the dowel





**4** The rare earth magnet is not essential to a beam compass – I use it to hold a small socket wrench that fits a small ring clamp. Drill a small hole through the clamp for the stem of a flat head nail

**5** As the clamp is tightened with the small socket spanner the nail is held immovable – it becomes the centre point of the compass. A long dowel can be slipped in the other end of the tube so that it is possible to draw circles of 1.5m diameter

**6** Use the beam compass to draw a circle on the blank and cut it out at the lathe. Heat a small steel faceplate in an old electric frying pan, until a stick of hot melt glue melts on the surface, then, locate it centrally on the front of the disc. The snug-fitting dowel in the centre has a nail in the end that locates the centre of the disc

**7** Here you can see a closer view of this process

**8** You can now put the hardwood disc on the lathe ready to be trued circular with a detail gouge

**9** The next step is to form a recess for the jaws of the scroll chuck. I do that using my homemade spearpoint-shaped wood chisel. Shape its cutting end to match the angle of the jaws of the chuck. While the disc is on the lathe, sand the back smooth with various abrasives, starting from 80 and going through 120, 180, 240 and 400

**10** Reverse the job and use a hot air gun to heat the faceplate until the glue melts and the implement falls off. Use a cabinet scraper to remove most of the glue. If it sets, heat the glue briefly to make scraping off easier. Dissolve any remaining glue using turpentine

**11** Use the indexing facility on the back of the scroll chuck to mark four points, 90° apart – these will mark the position of four holes – and drill 30mm holes, 12mm from the edge and 10mm deep







12



13

**12** Back on the lathe, give the board its desired shape, slightly rounded at the top edge and reduced under that to form an easy-to-pick-up lip. For that, use a small detail gouge. Even though the tool should be kept sharp, where the cutting is across the grain the result may be a little rough, so follow it with coarse, medium and fine abrasives to obtain a desired smooth finish

**13** My cutting board will be displayed on our outdoor picnic table, so I have coated it with beeswax to bring out the colour. Of course, during the cooking to remove the tannin in the wood it will lose that wax and become a little rough again as some of the grain will be raised, but this can be corrected when it goes back on the lathe. The next step is to make the feet, using silicone sealant. It is a very useful substance that is durable and heat resistant. It can be squeezed into a mould and will then set to the shape of that mould, so you need to make a paper tube



14



15

**14** Here you can see a view of the underside of the cutting board, showing clearly the lip that makes it easy to pick up the heavy board. Fellow turners at our club make cutting boards – very attractive multi-timber ones – that sit flat on the bench. I prefer feet that raise the board a little

### “Shape the dowel with a flat scraper...”



16



17

**15** Partly turn a short scrap of Tasmanian oak (*Eucalyptus regnans*), or a similar timber, to create a 29mm diameter dowel. It must be slightly smaller than the 30mm holes in the board

**16** It will become the former for the paper mould for the silicone. Shape the dowel with a flat scraper – slightly curved – and a large skew chisel

**17** Next, wrap a length of paper a dozen times around the dowel to form a tube. Some masking tape will prevent it from unrolling. You can then slip the tube off

**18** Using a parting tool, part off a 10mm-thick disc from the dowel and insert it in one end of the paper tube. Use a dab of glue and some tape to hold it in place



18



19

**19** Use a sealant gun to squeeze clear – actually it has a milky colour – sealant into the paper tube, filling it to the top. Set this aside for at least a week. After three days, you should be able to feel that the ends have already set, while towards the centre, the contents should still be soft when you squeezed the tube



**20** A week after filling the paper tube, the sealant will be set. Cut it up into 22mm-thick slices on the bandsaw. Be sure to hold it firmly in a cradle to prevent the tube from rotating when cut. The tube tends to get dragged down and jam the blade. Peel off most of the paper, but the remaining bits that stick to the sealant will come off in the next step



20

**21** The four slices to be the feet of the cutting board. It should now be obvious how you can make your own feet for cutting boards, trays, etc. You can also shape a knob in some scrap wood and sand the surface smooth. Next, coat this pattern with some petroleum jelly and cover it with silicone sealant. Once this coating has set, it can be used as a mould into which you can cast molten pewter. That pewter knob can be turned on the lathe and become an ornament for a lidded bowl, etc.



21

**22** Fill an old frying pan with hot water and place the board and feet in it. Bring to the boil and leave to simmer for an hour. The boiling water removes tannin from the surface of the wood and also softens the paper that still adheres to the feet. A deep pot would be better



22

**23** The water will discolour to a nice brewed tea colour and raise the grain slightly. After an hour, allow the board to dry before putting it back on the lathe and sanding the raised grain smooth. Coat it once again with beeswax to bring out the grain



23

**24** The feet have been glued in the holes that are 30mm wide and about 10mm deep. I used a squirt of the same silicone sealant as adhesive. The board is lying face down and after the 'glue' has set, the feet need to be trimmed back to the depth of the 6mm-thick section of MDF in which you also need to drill a 30mm hole. That is very simply done by placing the MDF sheet over a protruding silicone foot and slicing the excess off with a sharp knife



24

**25** The knife should be very sharp, as a blunt one will only push the flexible silicone away from the edge. Use a sawing motion and you will trim each foot in a few seconds. Leaving longer feet and ones of smaller diameter result in a board that tends to rock a little as it is used, so keep them shallow and wide



25

**26** The board is ready to be used. It can be rubbed hard with an abrasive pad and washed in hot water since the eucalyptus wood is very tough and hot water presents no problem to either the wood or the silicone feet. This is a simple turning exercise that presents no difficulty even for a beginner. I hope that the design for the homemade beam compass is useful and also that the use of silicone sealant is beneficial in other applications such as, for example, a plant stand ●

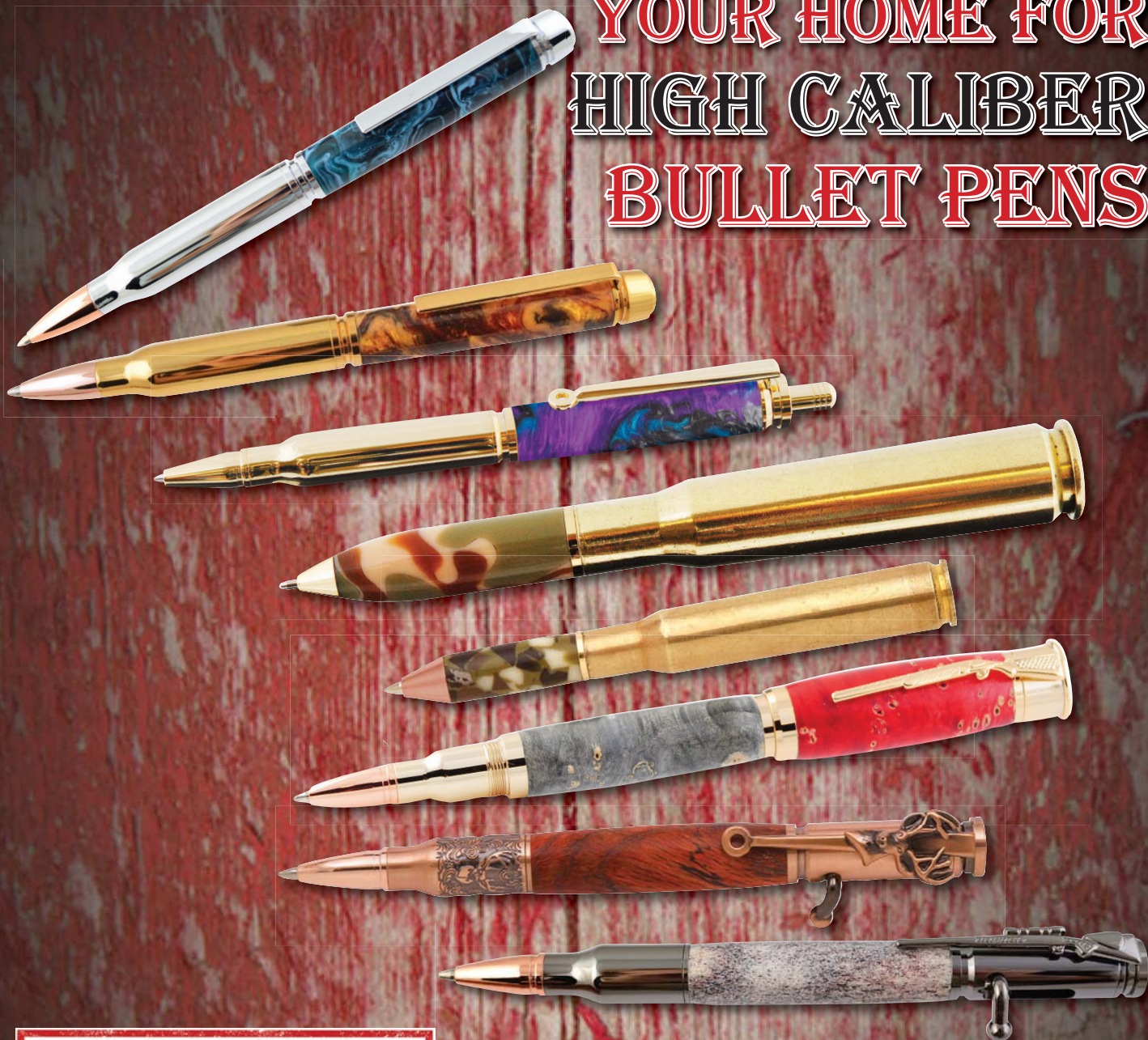


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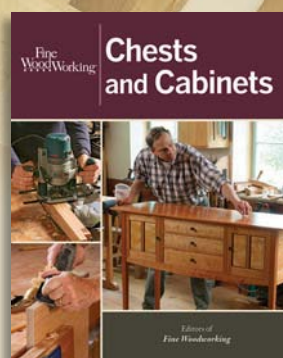
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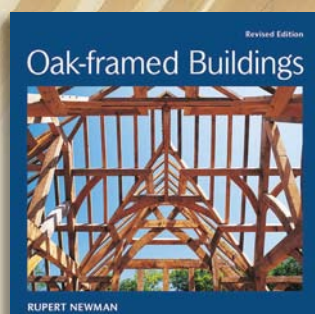
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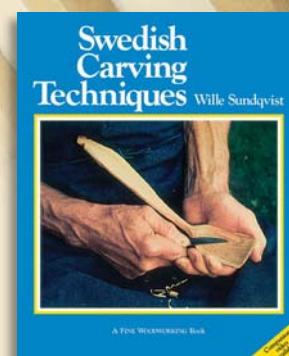
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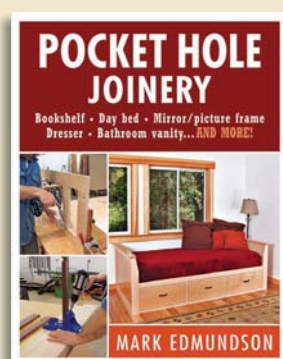
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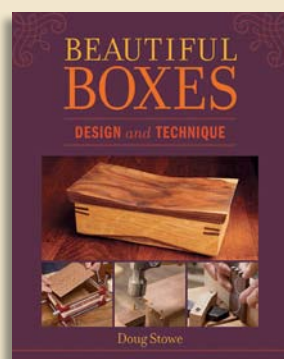
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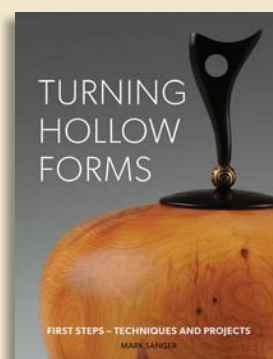
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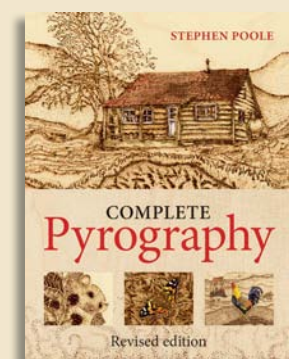
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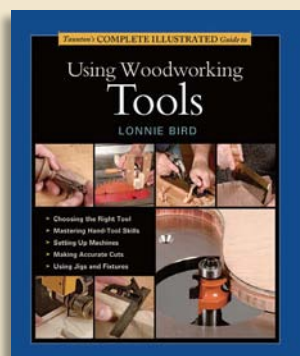
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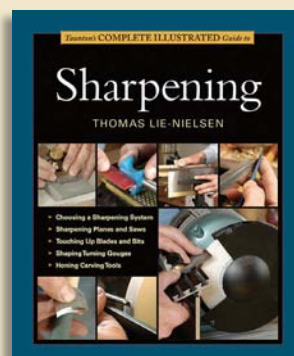
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# In the workshop with... Paul Starr

We find out more about woodturner **Paul Starr**

**T**rees have always been a passion of Paul's, especially for the wood they provide for turning. For a large part of his working life Paul has been a joiner, working with woods of all varieties on a great number of jobs. Paul soon became interested in developing his woodworking skills further, so learnt how to do woodturning. This meant he would have another specific craft and skill to further improve his furniture making.

## How, when and why did you start turning?

In 2011, I successfully constructed my own workshop in the back garden of my house. For quite some time, I had been looking through woodworking magazines, books, videos and scouring the internet to find what lathe would be most suitable for me. In 2011, I joined the Cheshire Guild of Woodturners and competed in the club competitions, winning the Turners Competition in 2012 and the Advanced Turners Competition in

2013. The Guild and competition have been a brilliant way to further improve my skills in

turning as it gave me objects to make that I would not normally have turned.



Paul at the lathe





### What and who are the greatest influences in your work?

I have been greatly influenced by the Art Deco period. Many people had mentioned that my work looked naturalistic, so I developed the characteristics in an attempt to maintain the aesthetic quality of the wood. I started to research shapes and items made from that period, as well as building my skills with attention to the quality of materials and finish.

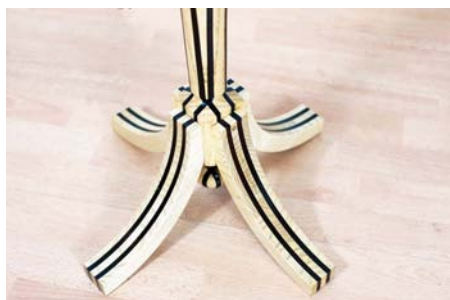
The person who influenced me the most was my father. He was an engineer and showed me how to set a job out regardless of the materials being used. More importantly than that, he taught me to have the pride to try my hardest, always do my best and not to give up.

### If you were to offer one sage piece of advice to someone what would it be?

It would be to never give up and always try your hardest, to listen to advice, regardless of who it is from. A collective can give you new ideas in ways that you were not thinking about. Also, only buy woodturning equipment that you have a job for. It is no good wasting money buying equipment that you don't need or will not use.

### What music and which book are you currently into?

I currently like classical and easy listening music, which helps me to relax and concentrate in the workshop. I also like Bob Marley, who I find very uplifting. I am currently reading *Wood: Identification and Use*, by Terry Porter, which I spend as much time as I can reading. This is an interesting book, which has given me valuable information about understanding the properties of different woods. It also



Art Deco table

provides crucial information about health and safety associated with the different woods used in turning.

### What is your silliest mistake?

My silliest mistake was last year, attempting to move a mortising machine on my own from one side of my workshop to the other. With a single trip, the machine landed on my left hand, fractured my fingers and crushed a knuckle on my index finger. Fortunately, the surgeons at the hospital managed to rebuild my damaged hand with titanium and screws!

### What has been your greatest challenge?

My greatest challenge so far was being accepted by Jason Heap – exhibition organiser – to exhibit at the Celebration of Craftsmanship and Design in Cheltenham in

2013. In my opinion – and many others – the exhibitors at this prestigious annual event are some of the best in this country and indeed in Europe.

### Name one thing on your 'to do' list

I would like to develop my skills in turning large hollow forms. However, in order to do this, I will need to invest in some new hollowing gauges and equipment. I think that the large hollow form represents one of the biggest challenges for a woodturner. I look forward to accomplishing this when finances and time will allow.

### Tell us about the piece you are currently working on?

I am currently working on a set of hi-fi speakers using a lathe for 95% of their



Paul and his impressive turned speakers



construction. These will be made from wenge (*Millettia laurentii*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and shaped rather like the jet engine of an aircraft. This has presented a difficult challenge in both the design and construction, as, to my knowledge, this design is the first of its kind. Hopefully, I can get it completed to be able to exhibit at the next Celebration of Craftsmanship and Design in Cheltenham.

### What is the one piece of equipment or tool you would not be without and why?

The piece of equipment that I could not be without at the moment is not a woodworking tool, but my computer! As a source of information and communication, it is invaluable. It is also extremely useful for finding materials, new timber, machinery and tooling at the best price. A computer also keeps me in contact with other woodturners and allows me to make friends with new turners who are always helpful with information and advice to support one another.

### If you could change one thing what would it be and why?

If I could change one thing at the moment, it would be the construction and layout of my workshop. After working in many industrial workshops, I tried to set it out in a similar way. However, I have found that I have very little room in my workshop as it is in my back garden, and I was limited to the size due to Building Regulations and my finances. I should have set my workshop out as a small individual workshop. I should have purchased machinery that was more appropriate for the space and should have



One of Paul's hi-fi speakers

### LATEST HOMEMADE JIG



This sledge is an example of one I use on a regular basis and is an ideal jig for a segmented turner. I also use it for cutting bowls in half to make a box and it is also used in many different ways, such as cutting wood safely. I would recommend one to any woodturner

tried to find new and more innovative ways to equip my workshop.

### What is your favourite type of turning?

My favourite type of turning for enjoyment and fun, is wet turning. When turning a piece of green timber with a moisture content of 22% or more, you get long streams of wood coming off your gauge. For me, this is an absolute pleasure. Turning a wet bowl and leaving it for 6-12 months on a shelf to dry and develop is a pleasurable experience that I would recommend everyone to attempt.

### If you had one wish, what would you wish for?

To fulfil my heart's desire, which is to make a comfortable living from just doing my woodturning. As a working class man in the woodworking trade for the last 30 years, I have had to do practical and commercial work and be bound by what the customer wants. I often find myself working in a customer's house, dreaming of being in my workshop, working on an exciting project.

### If you could have one piece of equipment, what would it be and why?

I would really like to have a larger, high-quality lathe. I currently have a Nova with a direct drive motor, which means that you don't have to change the belts. It is a brilliant lathe, but I feel I've outgrown it. Recently, I have been turning large items and feel that I am at the maximum capacity that this lathe can safely handle. ●

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### HANDY HINTS

1. On reproduction work, always make two more than you need in case of any damage or mistakes
2. Keep your workshop as clean and tidy as possible
3. Use a tack cloth after sanding; this will remove dust before applying a finish
4. Always pour oil, lacquer or any coating product into a separate pot to prevent contamination. Never pour any unused liquid back into the main pot
5. Always be prepared to learn: the more you can learn, the better you get
6. You learn absolutely nothing by just talking, so always remember to both listen and discuss
7. Throw away used, worn out abrasives. If reused, it has the same effect as a blunt gouge
8. Try to have fun and don't let mistakes get you down



Pair of candlesticks in ebony (*Diospyros spp.*) and Lakeland spalted beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)

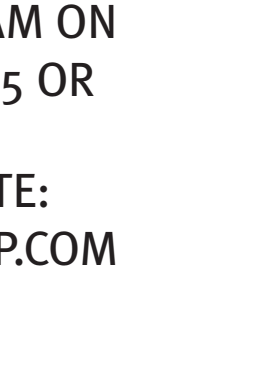
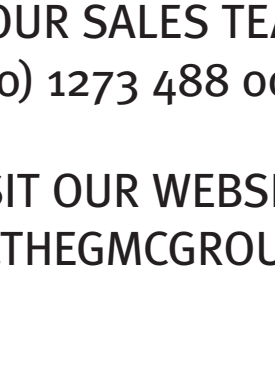
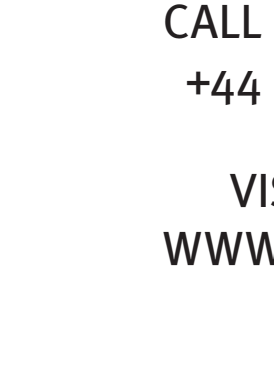
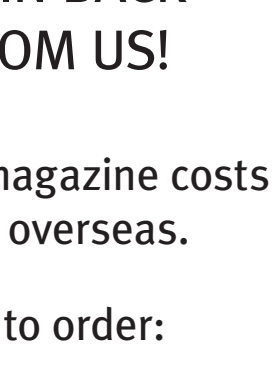
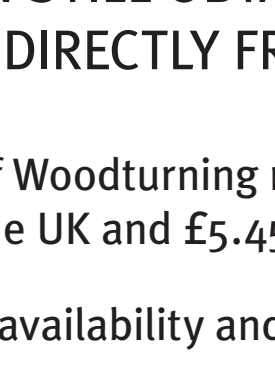
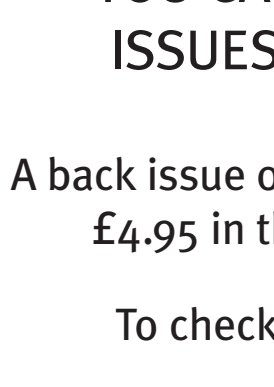
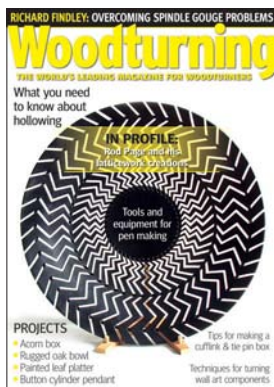
### LIKES

- Enjoy listening to highly skilled people giving advice and showing what can be achieved
- Appreciate good manners
- Meeting people who have new and inspirational ideas
- Paying a fair price for timber and not receiving inflated prices from greedy people
- Talking with like-minded people about woodturning

### DISLIKES

- Those who copy other people's ideas and take credit for them
- People who will not accept responsibility when a mistake is made and try to pass it on to others
- People who look down on other people – after all, we are all equal





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# Carved and stained pepper mills

Ian Woodford shows us how to jazz things up with this pair of carved and stained pepper mills

Over the years, we've all seen hundreds of different mill designs on various club and commercial sites, so if you are into making mills, there are plenty around to give you inspiration. I've been making mills on and off for three or four years now as gifts and for craft events; however, I wanted to make them more distinctive, so the ones presented here have evolved over the last few months and seem to attract good attention.

As with most mills, the turning is straightforward spindle work but with a certain amount of accuracy involved. The main body is simple in style but the fun comes in the carving and staining, which again is easy as it is quite random in the way it's done. The top, however, needs a little more care, but I'll cover this in more detail after finishing the main body.

The two woods used are sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and beli (*Paraberlinia bifoliolata*). Sycamore is used for the body section because it is easy to carve and takes stain well, while beli and sycamore are used for the top and give a good colour contrast to the stained area. Walnut (*Juglans regia*) or other similar coloured close-grained wood could also be used instead of the beli. I've made a distinction between salt and pepper by incorporating a separate sycamore bead in the tops with one left natural and the other stained black. These mills have the Cole and Mason 190mm mechanisms installed and the drilled hole sizes are based on their recommendations. If you choose to use a different mechanism, then basically follow their instructions.

After ebonising the body with lacquer and then sanding back, I used spirit stains for the colouring and chose colours that were not too vibrant and after applying each one, they were gently rubbed back with '0000'

wire wool. This process had the effect of lightening and merging the colours together without any hard boundaries.

The two drawings overleaf show all necessary dimensions and I'll take you through the process with the aid of photos and describe the various steps as we go, so let's get into the workshop and start having fun.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY IAN WOODFORD



## IAN WOODFORD



Ian spent his working life selling with a large pharmaceutical company covering a huge area in Australia and also in the UK. He has been turning for many years and since taking early retirement, has developed his skills and enthusiasm. He supplies various craft shops, exhibits at craft shows and has sold at the prestigious London Pen Show, although he now only makes on a commission basis. Ian belongs to two turning clubs in Hampshire and has demonstrated to members on a number of occasions. He has a dedicated workshop and enjoys new projects and challenges.

penultimate@uwclub.net



## PLANS

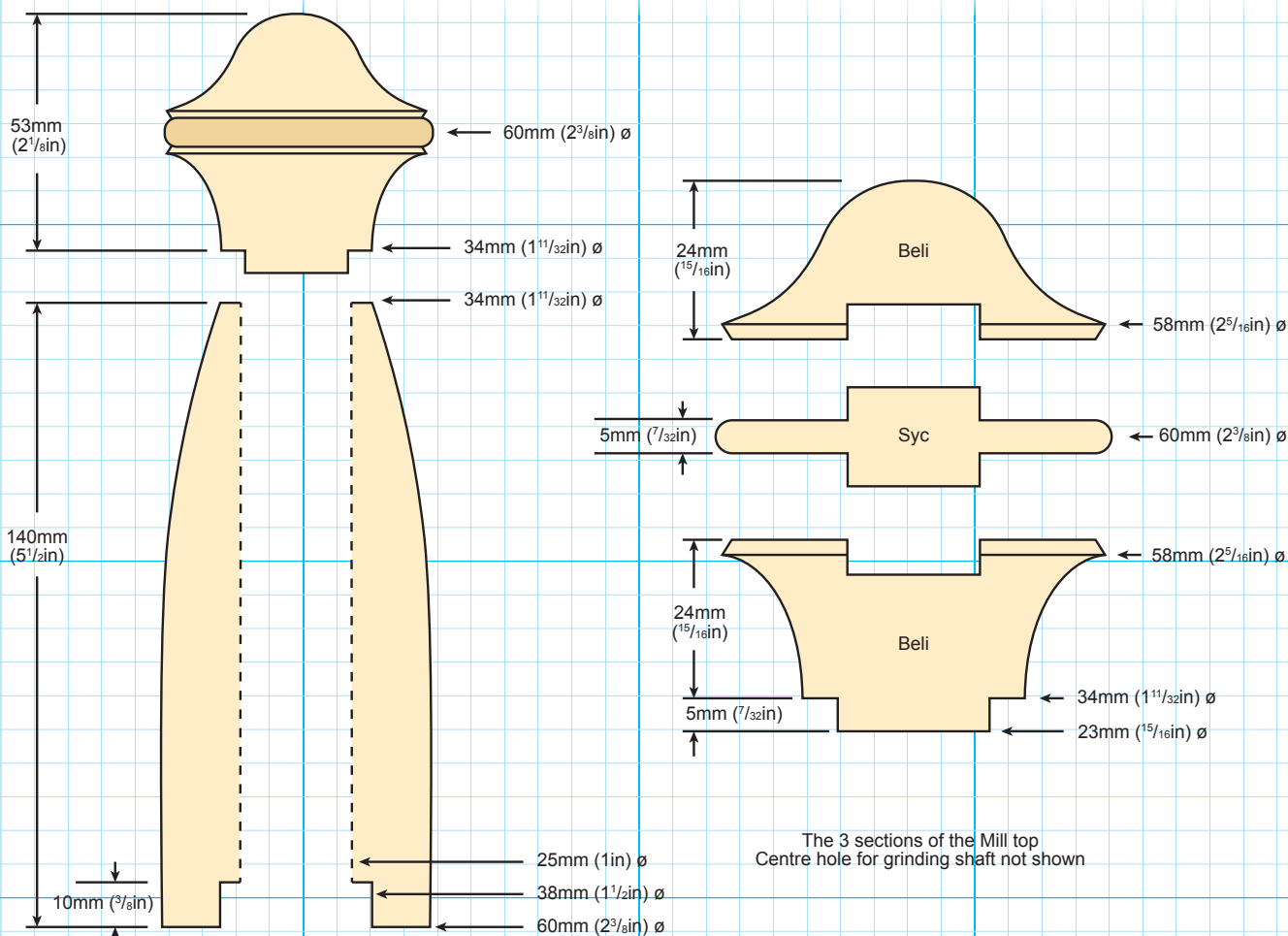
### EQUIPMENT USED

1.5mm thin parting tool  
Spindle roughing gauge  
10mm spindle gauge  
Skew chisel  
Bandsaw  
Four-jaw chuck  
Jacobs chuck  
9mm and 7mm drill bits  
38mm and 25mm Forstner bits  
Drive centre

Live tailstock centre  
Reciprocal carver or hand carving tool  
Ruler and callipers  
Bead forming tool  
Chestnut spirit stain  
Satin spray lacquer and ebonising lacquer  
Cole and Mason 190mm S&P mechanisms  
120 to 400 grit abrasives  
'0000' wire wool  
PPE: facemask, respirator/  
dust mask

### TIMBER REQUIREMENTS

Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*):  
150 × 75mm square  
Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*):  
50 × 75mm square  
Beli (*Paraberlinia bifoliolata*):  
75 × 75mm square  
Waste wood blanks for jam chucking



## Mill body

**1** The first step is to cut the blanks to size using a bandsaw, if possible – see table of tools and wood used for this project, which are shown above. There are three blanks for this project: two sycamore and one beli – the small sycamore blank is to be used to form the bead in the top of the pepper mill

**2** You can now begin to accurately mark the centres of the main body blank and mount between centres using your preferred centre drive and a revolving tailstock centre. Using a spindle roughing gauge, start to round the blank to about 62mm diameter

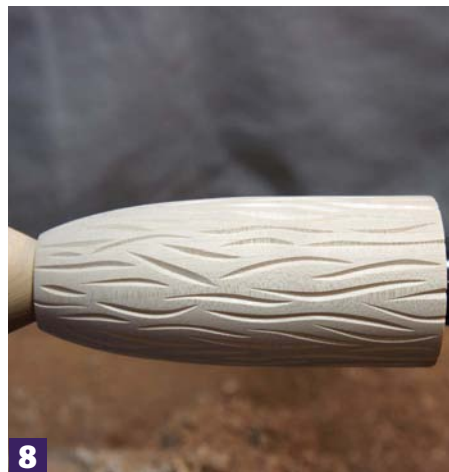


1



2





**3** Form a spigot at one end with a beading & parting tool to suit your chuck, but the larger the diameter of this spigot, the better. Now, accurately mount the blank in your chuck and tighten well. The next stage is to drill the hole through the body to take the grinding mechanism

**4** Mount a 38mm sawtooth bit in a Jacobs chuck in the tailstock. Drill in to a minimum of 10mm. Change to a 25mm sawtooth bit and start to drill right through the blank. You may well have to reverse the blank and drill from the other end as well if your sawtooth bit is not long enough. This drilling should be done at a much slower speed to avoid burning the blank and also frequently clear the shavings by withdrawing the sawtooth bit

**5** Once the drilling is complete, sand the end to 400 grit. At this stage, you can also trial fit the bottom part of the grinding mechanism to make sure of an accurate fit. Ebonise the bottom area where the grinding mechanism will be fitted

**6** Turn a waste block, mounted in the chuck, to a dovetail so that the base of the blank fits onto this and hold the other end by the revolving tailstock centre. This is important as having it mounted this way ensures that the hole is accurately centred when turning to shape. Now turn the body to shape as per the drawing. Sand through the grits to 400

**7** Now comes the interesting part – carving a series of random grooves in the body. I reverse the blank between centres – purely because I'm right handed – as I find it easier to carve this way and it also enables me to start some of the grooves right at the base. Using a reciprocal carver fitted with a 'V' profile blade – or a hand carving tool – start to carve the grooves. Use a powered carver for this and vary the direction, depth and length. When complete, sand again with 400 grit to ensure you smooth away any rough edges

**8** With the carving sanded and finished, spray ebonising lacquer over the mill body. Be sure to cover the lathe bed with a protective sheet and also mount paper towels between the mill and the head and tailstock supports, so that all adjacent parts of the lathe are protected

**9** Move the blank round by hand with each pass of the spray, until the surface is covered. Take care not to overspray, but check that all the grooves are blackened

**10** Once the spraying is complete, the lacquer now needs time to dry thoroughly, so follow the instructions on the spray can before moving onto the next stage. I left mine for a couple of hours while I got on with something else – a cup of coffee



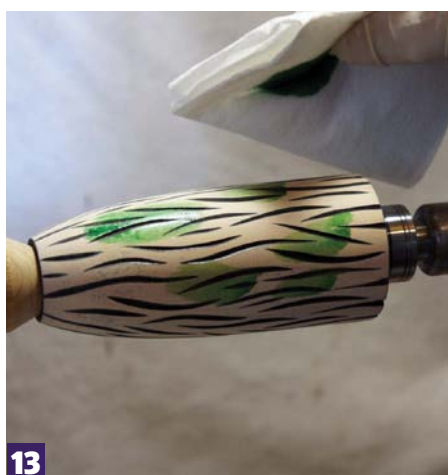
**11** Now sand the whole surface to remove all lacquer except from the grooves, which will remain black. Start with 60 grit and move all the way through the grits to 400. Stop the lathe frequently and sand with the grain to make sure all surface lacquer is removed



**12** Now for the staining. The colours you choose for staining are entirely up to you but I prefer them to blend well with each other and not to be too vibrant, otherwise they would detract from the simple lines of the pepper mill. I like to keep the colour impact fairly muted and chose a light green, pale red and faded blue. I will finally give the whole area a wash with orange. After each colour application, rub back with '0000' wire wool; this fades and lightens each colour and also partially blends together the edges of each colour. The final orange wash will be applied with '0000' wire wool and rubbed in over the entire surface



**13** When applying the colours – I used a kitchen towel – do this in a random fashion and then give a light rub with wire wool



**14** The same process is done with red colour, before it is rubbed in using a piece of kitchen towel...



**15** ... and finally with the blue colour. Follow this with a light wash with orange and then rub in with the wire wool. Set the mill body aside to dry completely while you get on with the mill top

## Mill top

**16** Refer to drawing 2 for all measurement details needed here. Take the small blank of sycamore and mount between centres. Rough turn to round – 63mm diameter – and using a parting tool, form a spigot to suit your chuck. Mount this blank in your chuck and face off. Turn a spigot to about 20mm in diameter and 2-3mm in depth. With a bead forming tool – or your favourite tool for beads – turn a bead to 5mm wide and 60mm in diameter. Sand the bead down to a finish – 400 grit. There is no need to sand down the side to the spigot as any rough surface on the flat face will aid in the gluing process



**17** Using a parting tool, form another spigot on the other side of the bead to match the first one you created



**18** You can now stain this bead black with spirit stain. Apply the stain with a small artist's paintbrush. You can then part this bead off and with the remaining sycamore blank, turn another bead to match the first, but don't stain this one. Part off and these two beads enable the user to distinguish between pepper and salt in the finished pair of mills







19



20

**19** Mount the beli between centres and rough turn to round. Turn a spigot each end for chuck mounting. Mark a line halfway along the blank and part in. Divide in two on the bandsaw using the parting line as a guide

**20** Mount one half in the chuck and face off the end. Make this face absolutely flat or even slightly dished as a bead has to be glued to this. Form a recess to match the spigot on the sycamore bead, then mount the remaining blank of beli and duplicate the first. When forming the recesses, keep testing with the bead for a good fit and when achieved...



21



22

**21** ... glue the bead in place. Make sure the two faces are firmly together with no gaps showing, then glue the beli blank in place

**22** Leave this to dry as per the instructions, then drill the appropriate size holes for the grinding shaft and the Nylon drive plug. The first hole to drill is for the drive plug and this is 9mm in diameter and to the depth of the plug. Then drill a 7mm hole all the way through for the drive shaft. All this drilling is done with the drill bits held in a tailstock-mounted Jacobs chuck



23



24

**23** When the drilling is complete, bring up the tailstock for support while turning the bottom section beneath the bead. Follow the drawing measurements and when forming the tenon that fits into the mill body, make it an easy fit but not a sloppy one. Where the beli meets the sycamore bead, make the diameter a couple of millimetres less than the bead itself. The bead will sit a little proud and looks better

**24** To complete the turning of the mill top, reverse the top onto a dovetailed wooden waste block and then support the other end with the tailstock; this ensures that the drilled hole is perfectly central. Turn to shape and sand to 400 grit. The main body and the mill top are now ready for finishing with a satin lacquer. I prefer satin to matt or gloss, but the choice is yours. To spray the two parts of the mill, turn the lathe on to a very slow speed – about 50rpm – and spray the surface a couple of times. Leave the lathe on for a few minutes while the initial coat touch dries and then check to make sure of a complete coverage



25



26

**25** Repeat this process for at least six applications. Mills are handled a lot and they need this minimum number of sprays to protect the surface during use. That is the easy part finished, now repeat the whole process so that you end up with a pair of matching mills with either the black or natural bead in place

**26** Your finished mills should look something like these. All that remains now is to sign the base – if you wish – then insert and assemble the mechanism and your mills will be ready to use ●



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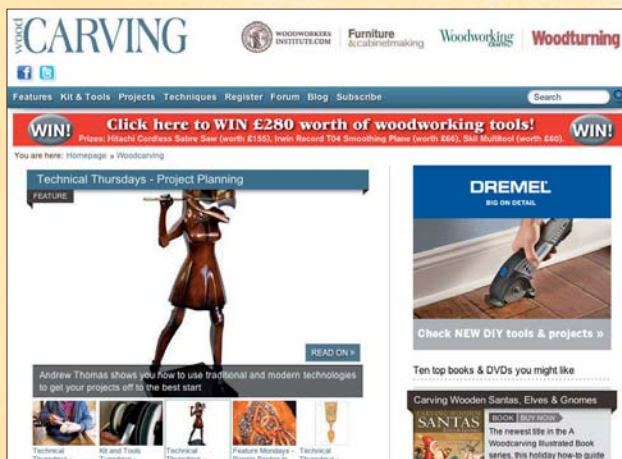
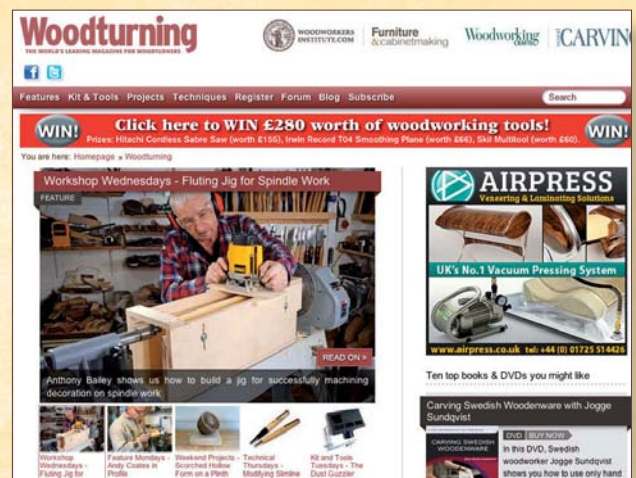
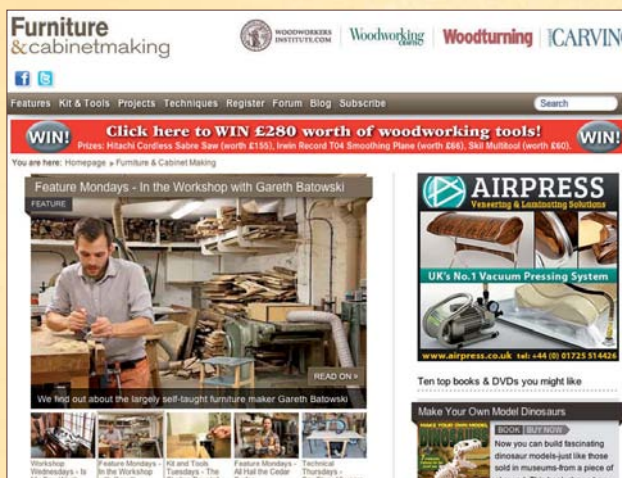
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# Adding colour to your turnings

Kurt Hertzog moves on to the subject of adding colour to your turnings and here, covers two different methods for doing so

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KURT HERTZOG

## KURT HERTZOG



Kurt is a professional woodturner, demonstrator and teacher and writes for various woodturning and woodworking publications in the United States as well as writing for *Woodturning* magazine. He is on the Pen Makers' Guild Council and is currently president of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW).

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Much like a colour photo is different, and many times better, than a black-and-white photo of the same subject, adding colour to your turnings can open new possibilities for your creativity. There are so many ways to add colour to your turnings that books could be written about them. Over time, we'll explore many of them from milk paint to additives in your finishes. Let's begin with two of the simplest yet most powerful methods I know of. In this issue, we'll cover 'over painting' and alcohol soluble dyes.

## Safety

The use of any chemical whether finish, paint or cleaner, always requires proper care. Plenty of ventilation in the area is



Simple shapes let pretty wood speak for itself. Bland and boring wood can become canvas for your colours and creativity

always recommended with chemical use. The use of an activated charcoal filter mask might be necessary, depending on the chemicals you are using, particularly if you are using spray paints. Of course, using safety glasses or a face shield along with protective gloves is a given. Always read, understand and heed the manufacturer's safety recommendations for your long-term well being.

## When to add colour

As a turner, you usually have one of two things to choose from to feature in your turning. If the wood is stunning, you can keep your shape simple yet pleasing and let the wood speak for itself. If you have relatively plain wood, you can create added interest by your shape and more exotic

turning execution. With the addition of colour, your plain wood can be enhanced as well as your chosen shape and detail. Colour can help overcome the plainness of your material along with letting you create another art form. Simply put, your turning becomes the canvas for your additional artistic expression.



Adding colour can create more interest on the plain Jane woods with little or no figure to speak of



## Alcohol dye colouring

One method of colouring wood is to impregnate the open pores with dye colours. One type is alcohol soluble dyes. Understanding the wide selection of dyes, their solubility and colourfastness issues is a huge undertaking. You can select your individual dye colours and create your own method for application if you wish. It is a very workable solution if you wish the flexibility it affords but it does take time and effort. If you want to get into using alcohol dyes in the easiest and fastest manner, visit your local

art store. Buy an assortment of Prismacolor alcohol dye markers or Faber Castell Pitt markers. Both of these are international brands and should be available locally. You may have other brand choices, depending on your location and merchant. I use and recommend those two particular brands based on my experience with their quality and colourfastness. Be certain that other brand choices you might select are in the same quality category. Regardless of brand, alcohol dye markers are a bit

pricey. They can often be purchased in different sized colour assortment packages, making them a bit more affordable. My local art store often has a 40% discount coupon that can be used. At whatever price, if kept tightly capped whenever not in use, they will last for a long time. Other than premature drying failure, they will provide plenty of service to you in your colouring. Even the dried markers can sometimes be rejuvenated with the addition of denatured alcohol – methylated spirits.

## Using alcohol dye markers



The Prismacolor alcohol dye markers are available in a wide range of colours so selecting wide or narrow ranges is possible



The range of control is at your fingertips. Additions of plain denatured alcohol or blending with other colours allows for maximum flexibility

I find the best colouration result occurs when used on finely sanded bare wood. I complete my turning and then sand to the desired level for application of my final finish. Rather than applying my finish at this point, I use the alcohol dye markers to apply my colouring. The Prismacolor markers that I use offer two styles of tip: there is a broad flat applicator at one end and a fine tip, pointed applicator at the other end. Depending on the area to be covered and neatness demanded by your application, you can choose the most

appropriate point to work with. The colour intensity builds with the application so you can increase the intensity by repeated application in the same area. The dye is carried to the wood and wicks into the pores. Once the alcohol flashes off, the dye colour is left behind. Because the pores of the wood will vary, the colouration will be similar but not identical. Of course, the species of wood along with any grain changes will impact the absorption of the dye. The dye will ‘bleed’ throughout the grain and take on a final

colour based on the colour you’ve used in combination with the colour of the wood. The blander and lighter coloured the wood, the more likely your chosen colour dye will dominate. The Faber Castell Pitt markers have a single end but offer a tapered brush type of applicator. Just like in art class, your colour choices and designs are totally up to you. You can be as plain or artsy as you desire. The beauty of alcohol dyes is that you can create whatever colour you want. Your knowledge of the colour wheel will



Your finish over alcohol dyes must be compatible and applied with care lest you cause problems with the colouration



A cherry (*Prunus serotina*) tidded box body with desired leaves pattern burned into surface and now readied for colouring with alcohol dye markers



let you 'mix' colours as needed. Apply your first colour and then apply the proper other colour to create your desired colour. For example, you can apply red and then apply yellow over the top of it to create an orange if the orange in the kit doesn't meet with your approval. To lighten any colour as well as attempt to erase errors, just add plain alcohol or a chosen lighter colour. For erasing or simple lightening of the colour intensity, I use denatured alcohol applied with a cotton bud. Depending on your location, denatured alcohol is available in your art or paint store and often at your local pharmacy.

The good characteristics of alcohol-soluble dyes are that they bleed through the wood fibres, remain there once the alcohol carrier flashes off and can be altered afterwards with the reapplication of alcohol and other dye colours. Their ability to be mixed, diluted and spread with other alcohol dyes and denatured alcohol gives you tremendous

flexibility. The bad characteristics are all of the same as noted overleaf. They will bleed where they want unless you provide an effective barrier. They are permanent once the alcohol is gone unless you reapply alcohol or any other chemical that they are soluble in. Special care must be used in selecting and applying a finish over your dyed project. Careless selection or application of your final finish can cause the dyes to run or mix in an undesired manner. Once the final finish is applied, there is really no fix for any dyeing problems other than sanding back to bare wood and reapplying your colourations. If you want to colour broad expanses without interaction with other colours in a confined and controlled manner, all is good. If you want to create a controlled colour application, you need to create a barrier to stop the colour bleed. The most effective manner I have found and often use is pyrography. By burning lines into the grain of the wood, you

effectively create a cauterised barrier that will stop the alcohol bleed halting the colour at that point. The marriage of pyrography and alcohol dye colouring is ideal allowing for the creation and colouring of patterns, pictures and other artistic expression.

Assuming you are going to use pyrography to control your dye colour locations, you may wish to apply a pattern, design or picture to aid in your creation. Depending on your artistic talents, you can also create your designs or pictures freehand on the fly as you burn. I'm not aware of any erasing mechanism should you burn in error. You certainly can pencil in your plans to get things laid out properly before you begin. If you make a mistake at that point, simply erase your error and redraw. You are also free to use any of the pattern transfer or design projection aids that are available. After completing your pattern with your burning, simple erasure or light sanding



Cherry (*Prunus serotina*) egg shell ornament roof with pattern pencilled in and burned. Notice the on the fly deviation from the original sketching



Prior to both burning and colouring, take the opportunity to refine the pyro settings and test colour results in a hidden test area of your material

will remove the remaining pencil lines if needed. I usually mark out my pattern lightly in pencil and burn right on the lines so erasure isn't necessary. If I redesign on the fly and deviate from some of the pencil layout, I will lightly sand the surface to remove them. I recommend that you always do a light sanding to prep the surface for the dyeing and then application of finish. Even if you don't need to do this based on your pencil markings, a light sanding helps to refresh the surface and remove skin oils, etc. It will help provide for the best surface possible for the application of your finish. This is part of my normal process because the pyrography also usually creates ridges or small blemishes by burning pitch in the wood. Because the burned lines project down into the wood fibres, sanding the surface to ready it for finish rarely causes any problem with their ability to stop the dye migration

### TIPS FOR ALCOHOL DYE MARKERS

1. Selecting and using 'bargain' markers is usually false economy. Your project materials and invested time are worth the cost to select and use the best quality and lightfast markers
2. Denatured alcohol will clean up: dilute applied colours and rejuvenate markers if they dry out
3. Pyrographed patterns and designs work well for controlling the bleed of the dye throughout the wood grain. Gluing up seams and grain irregularities will also work
4. Simple, light coloured and featureless woods lend themselves better to colouration
5. Keep your markers tightly capped whenever they aren't in your hand being used. Even laying them around uncapped while you work will dry them prematurely
6. Know or buy a colour wheel for the ability to create your own colours from mixing. The darker colour applied first lightened by the next colour or added alcohol works best
7. Practice with your colours on the actual turning in a hidden area. It will give you a preview of the final look of the colour and the interaction with the wood
8. Practice with your woodburning settings in a hidden practice area as well. You can zero in on the needed adjustment to get your desired line for that particular wood
9. End grain can be sealed with your preferred end grain sealer to better match the dye absorption between the end grain and face grain if needed
10. Don't forget or overlook the use of proper PPE and safe storage of chemicals, such as denatured alcohol



through the wood fibres. After sanding for final finish preparation, cleaning the surface with an alcohol wash to remove all dust, the dyeing process can begin once dry. It is your childhood art class, all over again. You can colour staying within the lines or get as free spirited as you wish. Once you are content with your colourations, corrections and are

ready for finish, apply your chosen finish lightly and repeatedly for desired build. I have found that wetting the surface too much in any one application will cause problems with my dyed work. My favourite finish is sprayed lacquer. I shoot it right out of a rattle can. Be safe with your spray area and PPE. I shoot the lacquer finish in the

lightest of coats and repeatedly to build until I get to the desired thickness. With lacquer, each coat chemically cuts into the prior coat so no additional surface prep is required between coats. I only use gloss spray lacquer using steel wool to bring the finish back to a semi-matte or matte finish if desired.

## Painting turnings



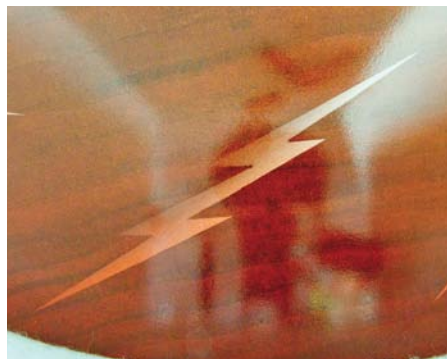
For simple overcoating paint jobs, just sanding and cleaning will provide a good surface. This pen and desk stand was coloured with acrylics



One of my steam-bent ornament stands. I favour the sawn wood look so rattle can acrylic straight over the maple (*Acer campestre*) steam-bending with some highlights



Many times, the wood was never even visible in Giles' work. It was only a palette to paint on. Artist – Giles Gilson



A cherry practice piece using the epoxy overcoat prepped for surface painting. Lightning bolts practice airbrushed on the epoxy substrate



Even if you have no intention of painting on the epoxy surface, I find that the epoxy properly prepared makes an exceptional turning finish

Painting wood for preservation or simple colouration is pretty straightforward. The surface is sanded as desired and the dust cleaned off. For surface sealing and improved adhesion, a primer can be used if needed and followed by painting. Wood by its nature forever takes up and gives off moisture dependent on the relative humidity of its environment. As the moisture content of the wood changes, it will physically change shape and dimension. These changes can be a little or a lot, depending on the species and the grain orientation. Successful cabinetmakers

know this all too well. Their joinery design and various door and drawer fits are designed specifically to survive and work well through these wood movements caused by moisture changes. I am not aware of any coating or finish that completely stops the moisture transfer in wood. When the wood moves, any paint on the surface needs to be sufficiently flexible to prevent cracking. With adequate flexibility and maintaining the bond to the surface, simple paint coverage can remain unscathed and apparently undamaged to the viewer. If you are going to paint a colour

and won't create anything that some paint stretching and surface movement will hurt, you can spray your chosen paint straight on to the prepared surface. I often do this with ornament stands to just give them some colour and let the wood grain and even sawing marks show through. With a simple spray acrylic paint, the bond is good as is the functional lifetime. To paint on wood in an artistic manner whether high end spray painting or a creative work with hopes of longevity requires a more stable substrate. The substrate must be as inert as possible and





Some collaboration work in process with Giles at his studio circa 2009. Pierced chicken and goose egg shells with automotive lacquers

provide the best surface finish and adhesion for your chosen paints. Once the surface has been properly prepared, the application of paint and the creative process is almost boundless. The method I use is one I learned from the late Giles Gilson. The substrate for Giles' painting on turnings or any wood for that matter was epoxy. The wood was turned or worked to the end point ready for painting. That surface was prepped to accept the epoxy and then that epoxy surface was prepped to accept the paint. Depending on the planned painting, sometimes the wood was never visible and needed only to be the form around which the epoxy substrate was created.

The process I use as taught to me is to make the turning surface finish ready. Once the completed turning surface is prepped and cleaned, a thin coat of epoxy adhesive is applied. Giles always used West System brand mixed per their instruction ratios. I currently use the same brand but have on occasion experimented with other available brands out of curiosity. The keys to success are having the surface properly prepped and applying the epoxy in very light coats. The goal is to get the epoxy to wick into the wood pores as much as possible on the first coat. In that effort, a warming of the wood and the epoxy helps. A shop heat gun or hand-held blow dryer used on the low heat settings is best. The temperature needs to be warm only. If you can't keep your hand in the airstream continually and comfortably, it is too hot. The warm air is blown across the wood surface pre-warming it and then on the epoxy surface after application before it sets up. This lowers the viscosity and helps to level the coat. Your

epoxy application tool can be anything from a flexible plastic card stock to a foam painter's brush. After the epoxy has fully cured, the surface is scuffed with abrasive to ready it for the next epoxy coat. Once again, the surface needs to be dust-free. After cleaning with denatured alcohol and allowing it to dry, that next coat of epoxy can be applied. The number of coats to be applied depends on the species of wood, the thickness of each coat after sanding and your intended paint application. Thicker isn't always better. I can't quote a recommended number of coats but several thinly applied coats are usually sufficient for most paint applications. After complete curing, that surface is sanded as needed to make a perfectly smooth surface. It is sanded and cleaned exactly as you would prepare the wood surface to receive a finish.

With your new more tightly sealed and inert surface, you can apply your painting in any level of elegance you wish. The finely sanded and clean surface will accept virtually any type of paint. Giles Gilson was known for his high gloss, candy colour automotive lacquer paint jobs. These multi-layer and optically tricky painted works made his art collected throughout the world. His final finish was a glossy lacquer that was highly buffed. In his studio, I used automotive lacquer paints but I am not equipped to use these at my own workshop. I use various acrylics from art store paint to airbrush formulations. For my simple overcoat



Other Gilson work in process in his studio



Work in process in Giles' studio. Ultimately, the inside throat of the turning would not be seen after assembly. Artist – Giles Gilson

colours, I will use acrylic spray paints directly from the rattle can straight on to the wood. For the more exotic paintings, I use airbrush formulations. Your choices can be based on availability and your proficiency with that material. The surface you are painting is not only very stable but also will accept nearly any paint you select. Obviously, with the epoxy substrate properly applied and prepared, nothing will penetrate through to the wood so the use of any penetrative colours won't work. My final finish is always sprayed lacquer. You can use whatever finish is compatible with your paint selection.



## TIPS FOR PAINTING

1. The final result is dependent on a quality surface to paint on. Care in the preparation of this will yield dividends in the final product
2. Use paints that you are familiar with and understand. I favour acrylics but you can use anything that will bond to the epoxy
3. Don't experiment and learn on a finished work. Create practice pieces, even flat, of the same species being used and work out the bugs
4. Painting, especially airbrushing and spray gun applications, is an art form in itself. Developing these skills will have far reaching applications
5. Masking and templates can make your painting easier and more professional. There are frisket and paint taping products that will assist your efforts
6. After your investment in time and effort in painting, give your work a durable final finish for protection. The longevity will depend on a tough finish

***“You probably won’t find a tougher finish for your work than epoxy”***



A finished Gilson piece on display at The Center For Wood In Art in Philadelphia



Additional work in process in the Gilson Studio. Artist – Giles Gilson

## Conclusion

For the turner who has never experimented with adding colour, you’ve now got two simple methods to begin working with. If you are a purist and abhor the thought of colouring your work, don’t add any paint but just give the epoxy substrate idea a try. Use it as your final finish for your work without adding any colour over the top. The epoxy finish coating can be as thick and as glossy as you wish. You probably won’t find a tougher finish for your work than epoxy. If you are not in need of a near archival and perfect subsurface for your painting, you always just spray a paint colouring directly on the wood surface. For my steam-bent ornament stands,

I leave the wood with a rough, as sawn texture. After the lightest of sanding and cleaning, I spray an acrylic paint right over the top of it to maintain the wood feel and look. I use as many coats as needed for coverage and colour intensity. An added spray clear lacquer top coat adds the gloss and protection. While these are only a few methods to tease your interest with, you are now armed to take on colouring of your turnings. I encourage you to give it a try. Whether you fancy yourself as a painting artist or not, I think you’ll find the enjoyment of learning something new along with the ability to create truly unique work a great addition to your arsenal. ●



A collaborative piece done in maple with Binh Pho in 2011. A jazzed-up version of a pen and base created as a donation to the AAW EOG fundraiser





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# Tips for turning offcentre items

In his latest article, **Philip Greenwood** deals with offset turning techniques

## PHILIP GREENWOOD



Philip has been turning wood since 1980 and started turning professionally in 1986. He was accepted onto the Register of Professional Turners (RPT) in 2006. He is also a member of the AWGB.

He can be seen working in his workshop in North Yorkshire and has demonstrated at the woodworking show at Harrogate since 2008. He runs courses at his workshop.

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Due to the offset base which this design uses, this project may test your skills. I make a few stands of several different designs and this is just one of them. The top is slightly dished so that any items placed on it do not roll off. I have kept decoration to a minimum to lessen the opportunity for food particles getting trapped. The top and stem are the two parts to be turned running true; the base has an offset hole for the stem. If you change the dimensions, then it may be best to draw this on paper first to look at the overall design – too much offset on the base may make this unstable to use. The use of the item needs to be considered as well – will it be functional or purely a decorative piece? The other consideration is the amount of vibration that may occur when turning the base due to the offset. Start your lathe at a low speed and if you have fixed ratio speeds, then try the

next speed up until you experience too much vibration, then just drop a speed. If you have a variable speed lathe, you have a bit more control over the speed.

No special jigs are used for this project and in terms of the tools needed, as before, there are just six standard ones. The only consideration is the offset of the base and the

## EQUIPMENT USED

10mm bowl gouge  
25mm French-curve scraper  
3mm parting tool  
20mm skew chisel  
10mm spindle gouge with a fingernail profile  
Centre finder  
Bradawl  
54mm diameter sawtooth bit  
Food-safe oil  
Glue  
PPE: facemask, respirator/dust mask and extraction

## TIMBER REQUIREMENTS

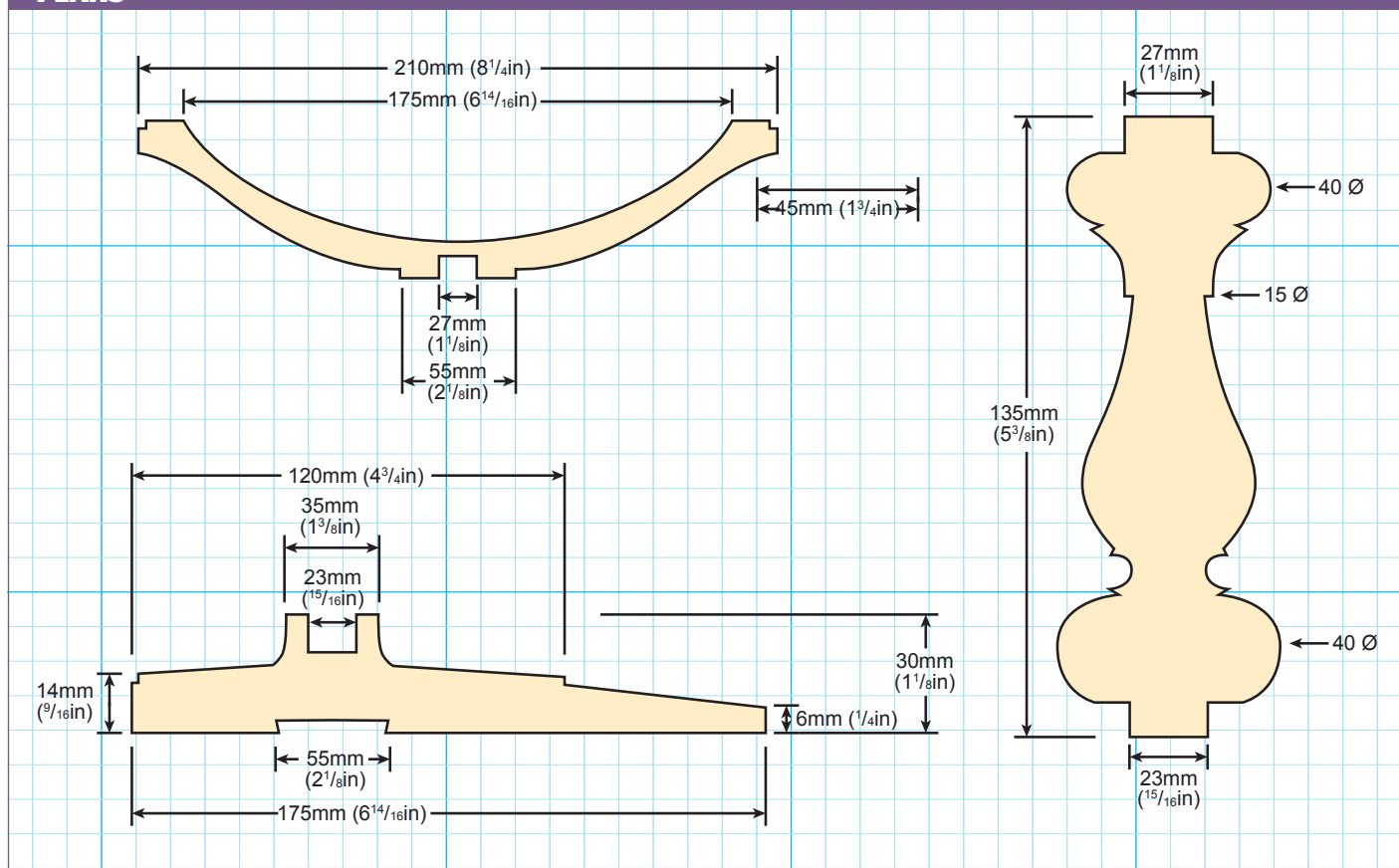
All components in sycamore  
(*Acer pseudoplatanus*)  
**Top:** 220 × 50mm  
**Base:** 180 × 45mm  
**Stem:** 135 × 50mm

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WENDY GREENWOOD

swing capacity of your lathe, but we'll look at this later. Sanding the top surface of the base is completed off the lathe as it's just too dangerous to sand the top side while the lathe is rotating. Instead, try to achieve the best finish from the tool to minimise sanding. Food-safe oil is used here, which means food can be placed on this stand, if you so choose.



## PLANS



## FINISHING: WHY USE FOOD-SAFE OIL?



Check the manufacturer's label to see whether it is food-safe

For an item that will, or can, come into contact with food, my answer is to use a food-safe oil, which is certified as such on the manufacturer's label. A lot of oil may say toy safe but this does not make it food safe. Likewise, oil you may have in your kitchen cupboard may not be suitable for people with a food allergy. If in doubt about a product, contact the manufacturer and ask the question. I sell my items so I must be careful what I use. The regulations in different countries will vary so check what you are allowed to use. When using an oil finish, apply this to bare wood, which will allow it to soak in. Leave for several hours and re-apply until the oil sits on the surface and will not soak in

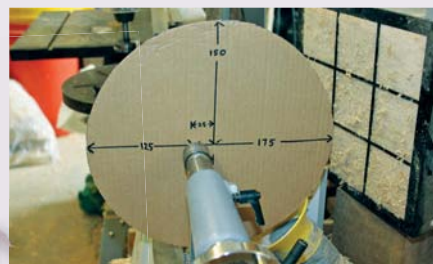
## SANDING ODD SHAPES

There are times when you have turned an item on the lathe that cannot be safely sanded the normal way on the lathe due to a natural-edge, or for an item such as this, where you do not have continuous contact. This is why I use a drill chuck held on a piece of timber with an spigot on, which holds in the chuck jaws. This means I can place a sanding arbor in the chuck with the lathe running around 800rpm. I then hold the item in both hands and place the item against the sanding disc, and once happy with the finish, I then move on to the next grit of abrasive, just like for any other sanding operation. The timber extension allows me to use this inside a vase

For sanding difficult shapes, try using a drill chuck



## HOW MUCH CAN YOU MOUNT OFFCENTRE?



Fix your out-of-balance item to a counterbalance jig

How much to offset an item depends on several factors: the first is the swing over the bed of the lathe – my lathe used here is 350mm. Let's say I have a disc of 300mm diameter, the radius of this will be 150mm and now I drill a hole 25mm offset from the centre. From this hole to the outer edge at one side will be 125mm while to the other edge will be 175mm, meaning this will have a swing of 350mm. The second factor will be how out-of-balance this is, which will cause the lathe to vibrate. A low speed will help but the only way to overcome this completely is to use a counterbalance jig – this is normally a large board, which your item is fixed to. You can then add weights at the opposite side to balance your item – a search on the internet will allow you to find these



**1** The first step is to use a centre finder to locate the centre and mark this with a bradawl, then use a 54mm diameter sawtooth bit to drill a hole in the top of the blank; this will allow the jaws of your chuck to fit in the recess, as can be seen here



**2** Use a bowl gouge to true up the outside; this will remove any imbalance so the lathe will not vibrate if the blank is running out. Stop the lathe to move the toolrest and clean off the face, using a push cut



**3** You can now start to remove a lot of waste from the underside, using a pull cut, which is best to remove the waste quickly. You are looking for an ogee shape. Leave a flat in the centre until this is marked out



**4** Use a pencil to mark a line for the recess to take the spigot of the stem – this is about 25mm. The larger diameter line is where a spigot will be cut for the chuck jaws to grip



**5** Cut in the recess for the stem spigot, starting with a parting tool to remove the bulk of the waste, then using the long point of a skew chisel to finish. You can then cut the spigot again using the parting tool



**6** Finish shaping with the bowl gouge right up to the spigot, then check the surface for any grain tear-out and a smooth flowing curve. Use a scraper to refine the surface, which will reduce the amount of sanding. Look for a fine shaving and always hold the handle higher so the tip is in a trailing mode. Cut the dovetail on the spigot and then sand to a finish



**7** Remount on the spigot, shape the inside of the top, then remove the waste with the bowl gouge, checking the wall thickness as you go. Remember the recess in the base for the stem when checking the base thickness. Use a scraper to remove any small marks from the gouge, then sand the surface to a good finish



**8** Mark the centre of the blank and a second one 25mm from the centre; this is the amount of offset you will have. Don't drill the hole too deep as the centre hole needs to be removed when you turn the top side



### HANDY HINTS

1. Check the piece will rotate before you switch on the lathe
2. Start any offset work on a slow speed; you can increase this slowly if it is safe to do so
3. Think about the offset you can swing on your lathe and the amount of vibration this can potentially cause: the more offset, the more vibration you will have to deal with





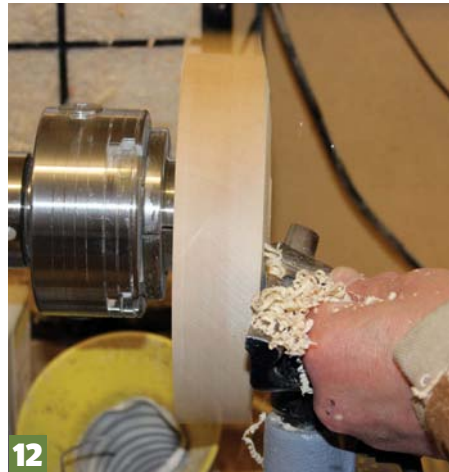
**9** First, mount on the centre hole and true up the outside to remove any imbalance in the blank. Next, take a cleaning cut to leave the surface smooth, then do the same for the bottom of the blank, making sure the bottom is flat. You can then sand smooth – note that this is the last time the base will run true



**10** Now move the base over onto the offset hole on the chuck. Check the blank will clear your toolrest by rotating by hand before starting your lathe on a slow speed. Now, with the lathe running, make a pencil mark on the centre of rotation, then mark the diameter of your chuck jaws. Use the parting tool to cut to the right of the pencil line until you reach a suitable depth, then clean out the centre, cut the dovetail and sand



**11** Hold on the recess on the bottom of the base and start to remove waste material for the top face. At this stage, don't remove any from the centre 75mm as you are just looking for the basic shape



**12** This is the view from the front – you can see the ghost image at the top, which is due to the base being offset. Use a pull cut to remove the waste from the top and look to start the basic shape



**13** With the lathe stopped, mark a suitable diameter for the stem to fit into – the stem will have the spigot turned to this size later. Next, cut this recess to size and a suitable depth, using the parting tool



**14** Shape the top thinning towards the edge to give a lighter appearance. Make sure the screw hole that was drilled in the blank centre at the start is completely removed. You can now see the raised portion where the stem will fit



**15** You should now have shaped this to completion and you can refine the surface to reduce the amount of sanding later, using a very sharp gouge. Add a little detail here using the parting tool. The centre is the ONLY part that can be sanded, but use extreme caution – the rest will be sanded later



**16** Mark the centres at both ends and mount the stem piece between centres, using the spindle roughing gouge to turn this to round

### HANDY HINTS

- 4.** Think safety when sanding off shapes or offset items – sanding pads can be replaced, but your fingers cannot!
- 5.** When you are turning and especially when you are turning offset pieces, always wear safety glasses or a face shield and dust protection at all times



**17** Using the spindle gouge, turn the basic shape and once this looks right, start to refine the spindle with detail. I chose to have a bead at each end, which will blend into the top and base

**18** Mark the width of the spigot accordingly to the depth of the holes in the base and top, then turn to the correct diameter. Remove the stem from the lathe and try for fit in the top and base

**19** Try to keep the tool bevel in contact with the surface at all times; this will help you to control the cut and also produce a good surface. If you seem to have a rough surface, sharpen your tool and you should then get a clean cut. The last job is to sand through all the abrasive grits up to 400

*“Try to keep the tool bevel in contact with the surface at all times”*

**20** This is the sanding jig I use to sand odd-shaped items using 120 grit, with the lathe speed at around 600rpm. Hold your item lightly against the sanding disc to remove any tool marks. To avoid removing the detail, finish the rest of the grits by hand

**21** I used food-safe oil on my stand but even this type of oil can dry your skin so use gloves to apply it. Three coats are normally sufficient to achieve a good finish. De-nib in between coats if needed

**22** The last job is to glue the three pieces together. Remove any excess glue before it sets as per the instructions given on the bottle

**23** Your shallow dish with an offset stand is now complete and should look something like this ●

### HANDY HINTS

- 6.** Use a piece of cardboard to check what the offset looks like and also to check that it will rotate over the lathe bed
- 7.** Do think about the oil you use – for example, if this will or could be used for food
- 8.** Try using a contrasting timber for the stem of the piece
- 9.** Think about the possibility of food particles becoming trapped if you add fine grooves for details
- 10.** Be careful when disposing of cloths that have been used to apply oil, as some oils can spontaneously combust





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# Kit & Tools

A mixture of press releases showing the latest tools and products on the market

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## BRAND NEW RANGE OF WOODTURNING CHUCKS AND JAWS FROM RECORD POWER



This exclusive new range of chucks and jaws has been developed using Record Power's extensive experience and knowledge of woodturning in conjunction with a group of highly experienced professional and hobby woodturners, to bring you the ultimate in quality, versatility and value. Incorporating the best elements of their previous ranges, Record Power has also listened closely to their customers over the years and has taken note of their feedback, suggestions and requests to guide their design approach. The company has designed a new generation of chuck bodies and jaws to offer woodturners great performance and ease of use.

The SC3 Geared Scroll Chuck and SC4 Professional Geared Scroll Chuck are direct replacements of the previous G3 and Supernova2 models, with some notable improvements.

Integral to the performance of a chuck are its jaw slides. On both new chucks these have been made noticeably larger than others on the market, increasing their torque and load bearing abilities. Manufactured using the powder metallurgy process, they are made from high tensile steel, impregnated with nickel-copper to ensure superior strength and longevity.

The range is manufactured using precision CNC equipment to exacting standards. The jaw slides are controlled using a

precision engineered geared scroll, which moves in the conventional screw direction – clockwise to close the jaws and anti-clockwise to open them. Many other chucks work in the opposite direction and are therefore not as intuitive to use as the SC3 and SC4. The Super Geared True-Lock™ technology used to manufacture the gears ensures excellent strength and unsurpassed surface and dimensional accuracies to give smooth, vibration free operation.

The SC3 Geared Scroll Chuck is available in three of the most popular thread sizes:  $\frac{3}{4}$ in  $\times$  16 TPI, 1in  $\times$  8 TPI and M33  $\times$  3.5.

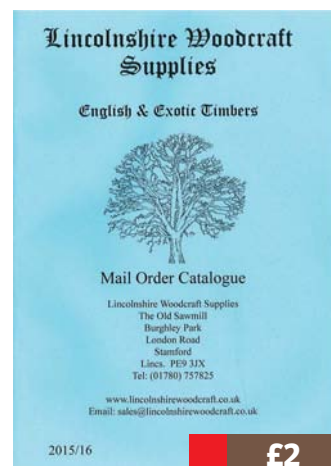
The SC4 Professional Geared Scroll Chuck is available as an insert version, with a full range of inserts to fit, meaning it can be used on virtually any kind of lathe. Unlike the previous professional chuck, the SC4 is now available with an M33  $\times$  3.5 insert. The chuck body has been designed specifically to hold this large thread size insert, therefore offering even more flexibility to customers who may want to upgrade to or from an M33 lathe.

Both the SC3 and SC4 are being offered for the UK launch in the same value packages as their previous range of chucks with the same selection of free jaws.

**Contact:** Record Power  
**Tel:** 01246 571 020  
**Web:** [www.record-power.co.uk](http://www.record-power.co.uk)

## LINCOLNSHIRE WOODCRAFT SUPPLIES' MAIL ORDER CATALOGUE

Lincolnshire Woodcraft Supplies have produced a mail order catalogue, which is packed full of English and exotic timbers. There is a great introduction to the conservation and supply of tropical hardwoods, so you can be assured that the wood you're buying meets current legislation and comes from sustainable sources. Not only is there an extensive selection of timbers, but also a wide range of finishing products, turning tools and accessories for clock making. An additional bonus is a useful page at the end of the catalogue, which tells you about the upcoming woodworking shows.



**Contact:** Lincolnshire Woodcraft Supplies  
**Tel:** 01780 757 825  
**Web:** [www.lincolnshirewoodcraft.co.uk](http://www.lincolnshirewoodcraft.co.uk)

## AXMINSTER COPY LATHE ATTACHMENT 1,000MM

This copy lathe attachment from Axminster is great for turners who are creating a lot of repeat turned items that have to be produced quickly and accurately. Work can be duplicated from either a previously turned piece or a profiled template fitted to the attachment. This versatile attachment can be setup in line with the lathe bed for spindle work or at 90° to the bed for faceplate operations. Suitable for Jet lathes, 1442 1642 models.

**Contact:** Axminster Tools & Machinery  
**Tel:** 03332 406 406  
**Web:** [www.axminster.co.uk](http://www.axminster.co.uk)

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## 2015 TREND ROUTING TECHNOLOGY ROUTING AND WOODWORKING CATALOGUE

The brand new Trend Routing Technology 2015 Routing and Woodworking Catalogue is now available and packed with Trend products such as router cutter ranges, power tools and tables, routing jigs and accessories, saw blades, Trend Snappy Drill System, as well as sharpening and clamping products. This year, Trend is celebrating its 60th year and as a result, the company will be launching some exciting new products. To request your free copy, visit your local Trend Routing Centre, download a copy online or see details below.

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## GLENN LUCAS 'MASTERING WOODTURNING' DOWNLOADABLE VIDEOS

You can now download Glenn Lucas' videos to your smart phone, iPad or computer, share with your other devices and have this resource beside you at the lathe while turning.

Mastering woodturning videos include 'Sharpening Techniques', 'Bowl Turning Techniques' as well as Tools and Techniques'. Glenn tells us: "It is now the norm to have everything you need on the screen in your jeans, so why not bring the teaching to the place you need it too. There are many more short videos to come. As well as 'how-to-make' projects, I am making short tutorials about the things my students ask me during classes, and some of the most important things they forget when they leave the class."

To find out more about the downloadable



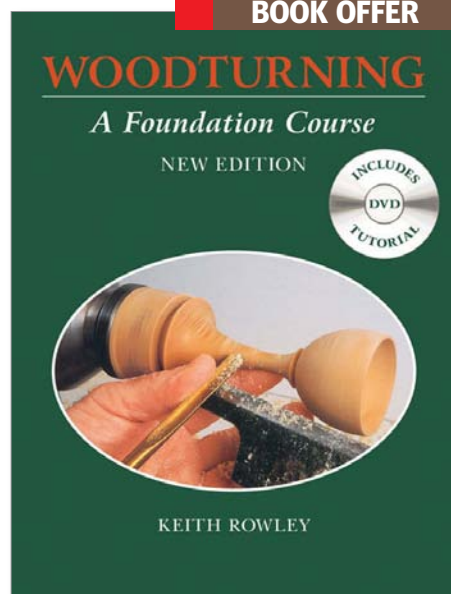
videos as well as Glenn's DVD series, see details below.

**Contact:** Glenn Lucas  
**Tel:** +353 (59) 972 7070  
**Web:** [www.glennlucaswoodturning.com](http://www.glennlucaswoodturning.com)

£11.50 PER VIDEO

## Woodturning: A Foundation Course by Keith Rowley

BOOK OFFER



This is a new edition of Keith Rowley's *Woodturning: A Foundation Course*, first released in 1990, which now includes a DVD tutorial presented by Keith himself. Overall, it is an introduction to the world and art of woodturning, with information on the subject packed in. Written in a friendly manner, Keith takes a methodical approach to woodturning, to build up the readers' skills and confidence in turning, in timber selection and choosing the right tools to learning efficient and safe techniques. The text-based guide, as well as good quality photographs and illustrations, has 12 projects for you to try. These projects give you a wide variety of pieces to practice your newly-learnt skills on. The projects include a goblet, apple and pear, your first bowl, a platter, bar stool, staircase balusters, plinth, an inlaid nut bowl, twig pot, pepper mill, table lamp and a twist pen.

Throughout the book, Keith uses six easy-to-remember 'rules of woodturning'. He guides you through the 12 projects step-by-step, in a logical and progressive manner. He covers between centres and faceplate turning, along with boring, routing and finishing techniques, as well as looking to the very basics, from wood grain and the design of a piece, to courses and where to go for further education after finishing the book.

**ISBN:** 9781784940638 **Price:** £19.99

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# Andrew Hall – 'Leonidas War Helmet'

**Andrew Hall** is best known for his turned hats. Here, he shares one of his helmet turnings with us, which was influenced by watching various films about ancient Greece

made this piece in 2009 after attending a three day one-to-one course with the master of colour and texture, Nick Agar. I'm probably best known in the demonstration circuit for my hats, showing club members techniques learnt from Johannes Michelson – the hat man himself – when I had the opportunity to observe him demonstrate at the Irish Woodturners' Guild Seminar in 2006, where I sat and watched him demonstrate for three days.

The inspiration behind 'Leonidas War Helmet' came from watching the films *300* and *Troy* and although I love turning hats, I wanted to create something new and unique that would interest the groups of turners I demonstrate to. Helmets were the solution as they would allow me to show many different turning techniques to achieve my goal of a finished helmet. I also wanted to incorporate ways of showing texture, embellishment and colour using the techniques learnt from Nick.

I returned home from Nick's course brimming full of enthusiasm and I turned this ceremonial helmet with information researched from the internet and a little artistic licence. The main helmet is made from ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) turned wet utilising the symmetrical knots in the design. The under crest and main crest are both made using sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*). The stand and arrow are made from sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and the base of the stand was made using Corian.

The texture was created using rose cutters and a Dremel, Proxxon power carver and Proxxon Arbortech. The Chestnut stain colours were applied with an airbrush and embellished with Chestnut gilding creams. The finished helmet was then lacquered with Chestnut melamine. I also used upholstery studs for added decoration and the arrowhead was bronzed using verdigris.

To conclude, I have been inspired by many turners both professional and hobby and my belief is that if you want to succeed in either area, find out who is best at what you want to learn and attend a course with them, as life is too short to try and figure it out for yourself! Then, when you are inspired by the masters, you can develop the skills you have learnt and put your own stamp on your art. ●

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'Leonidas War Helmet',  
ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*),  
sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*),  
sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and a  
Corian base, 500mm high



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW HALL





**Axminster Skill Centre tutor and professional woodturner Colwin Way is turning a piece of green sycamore 200x300mm which will eventually become a vase.**

*With the lathe, he is using an Axminster Evolution SK114 Chuck and Type G Dovetail Gripper Jaws. He starts to turn at a speed of 500rpm as initially the log is quite unbalanced and then increases the speed as it becomes more even.*

*There is no need for Colwin to wear a face mask as the timber is wet and comes off in ribbons instead of creating dust. Use of a coarse abrasive at a later stage will help the log dry out.*

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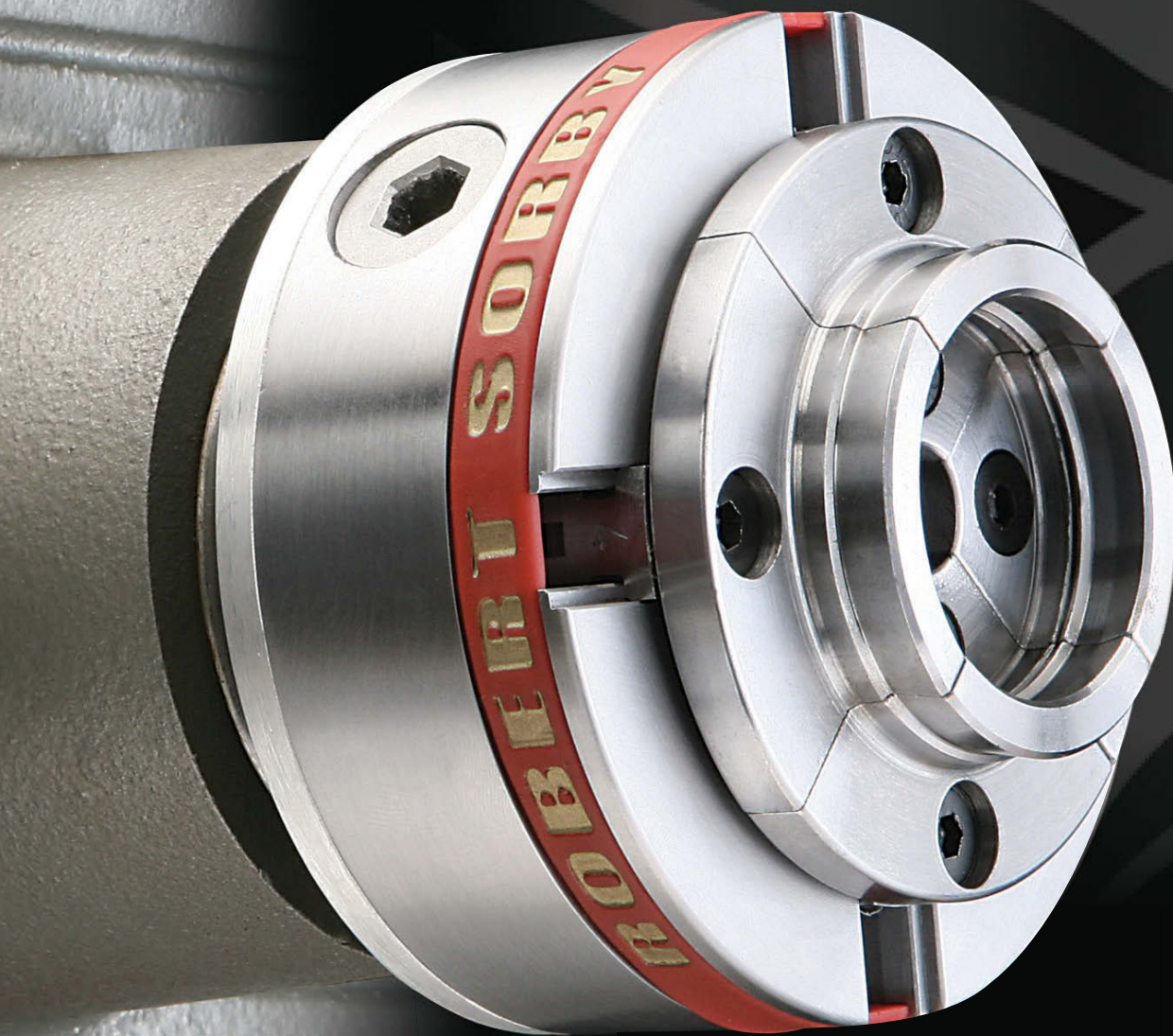
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